"The Operators' Choice"

PLAY METER Magazine

JULY

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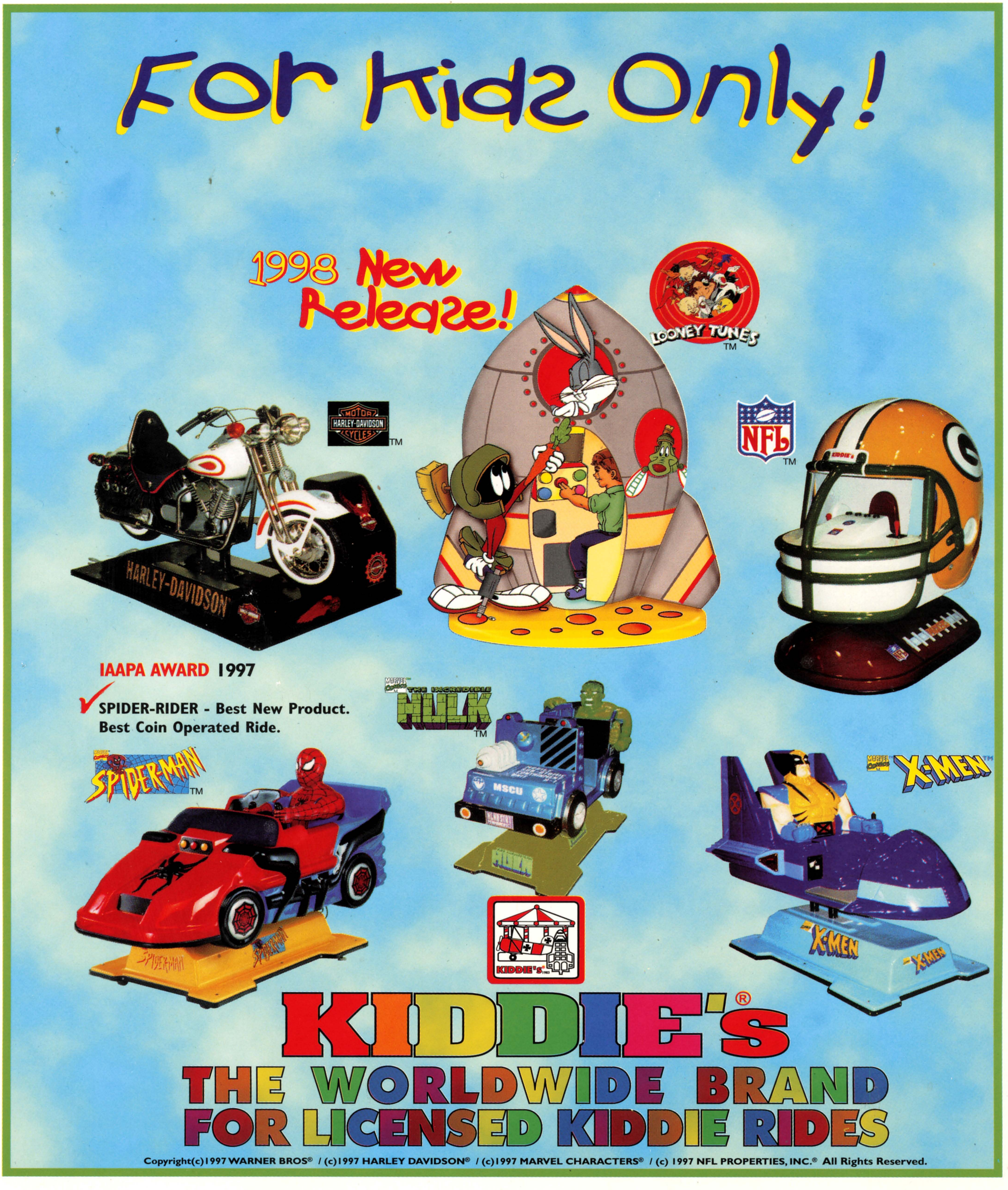
FOR THE COIN-OP ENTERTAINMENT/FEC INDUSTRY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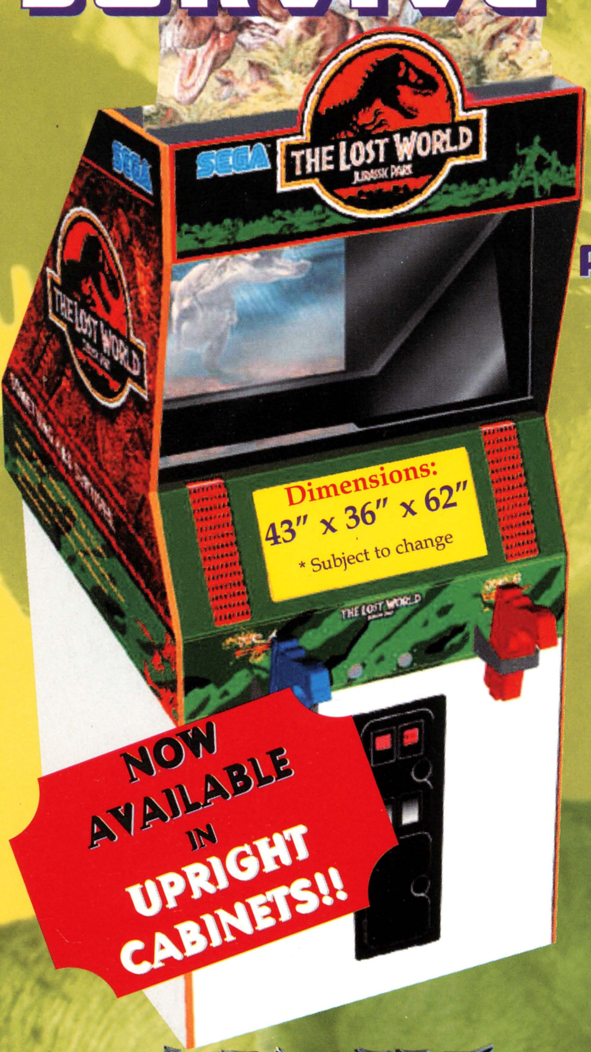
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News BULLETIN

TOBACCO BILL KILLED

The McCain bill, named after its sponsor John McCain (R-Arizona) and focusing on tobacco issues, was killed June 17 by the Senate's Republican majority. Those behind the bill called it a tragedy, while others said that the $1.10 per-pack increase for cigarettes was simply unacceptable and that too many provisions were added after it came out of committe making it politically impossible to pass. Both Democrats and Republicans are optimistic that there will still be legislation to discourage young people from smoking, but both sides agree that future legislation probably won't be as comprehensive as this bill. An original deal signed over a year ago between 36 states and tobacco companies included penalties if tobacco companies don't reduce teen smoking and authorized the Federal Drug Administration to regulate nicotine as a drug. It also banned marketing tobacco products to youngsters.

We asked Mark Levine of Melo-Tone Vending and co-chairman of AMOA's tobacco committee, how this affects operators of cigarette vending machines. He stressed that it is far from dead. "We are confident that Congress will pass some form of legislation. I'd like to tell operators not to get down. We've been successful in protecting our position and we must press forward We'll be contacting vendors in the near future as soon as we get a better picture of where the leadership in Congress is headed."

Cigarette vending operators were favorably written into the legislation when it was passed by the Commerce Committee. It called for cigarette vending machine operators to be compensated for the loss of their businesses; the vote was 19-1 by the committee in favor of this language. This provision survived all of the Senate floor debates. Mark added, "We believe that there were too many amendments added to the original legislation for it to pass. We'll await the next legislative bill to follow."

PHILADELPHIA AVOIDS CIGARETTE MACHINE BAN

A proposed ordinance to ban cigarette vending machines in Philadelphia was amended by the city council to allow machines to operate with lockout devices that permit one vend at a time. The new ordinance went into effect June 1; operators have six months to install the lockout devices. Penalties for dispensing cigarettes to minors are a $100 fine the first time, $200 the second time, and $300 plus confiscation of the machine the third time.

Key to avoiding the ban was a machine and lockout device demonstration in council chambers. According to Arnie Aronovitz of Apple Vending, "Council members had no idea what a lockout device meant. The demonstration impressed them, and they liked the fact that operators told them we wanted to part of the solution to help minors stop smoking."

CHICAGO OPERATORS FIGHT BACK

Chicago operators are embattled against a repressive ordinance enacted on April 29 by the city of Chicago. Purportedly effective on May 9, the ordinance would have rendered illegal within the city any device that includes a knock-off circuit, allows more than 10 replays, maintains a count of payoffs or the number of times a person has won a game played on the device, or maintains a tally of players' scores other than the tally displayed to players.

The ordinance did make exceptions for cranes and redemption machines as defined under state law. A 70-strong association of operators, the Independent Amusement Operators Association, resorted to the courts soon after the ordinance was published, and was successful in obtaining an injunction against the city. The association expects the city will modify its ordinance to get around the injunction if possible, and that a new round of litigation is imminent.

SEGA CONFIRMS MOVE TO SAN FRANCISCO

Three divisions of Sega's consumer business will be moving to San Francisco, Calif., by Jan. 4, 1999. The three divisions include Sega Entertainment (computer games), SegaSoft (software), and Sega of America (game consoles). Also, reliable sources tell us that Sega Enterprises Inc. will buy back the game sales division from Sega GameWorks in a mutually amicable arrangement.

Sega Enterprises will remain in Redwood City, while Sega Pinball will remain in Chicago.

Hayao Nakayama will be in charge of all coin-op activities outside of Japan.

A Sega Pinball employee told Play Meter, "There is not a chance we'll be moving. You can't build a pinball machine in California."

Sega of America recently laid off all but about 100 of its employees, but Bernie Stoler, president and chief operating officer said in a newspaper article that the companies expect the work force to grow to a total of 800 employees during the next several years. Sega of America plans to launch a new system in the near future.

GAMEWORKS OPENS SUMMER GAMES

A series of world-class competitions on the hottest sports and simulation games kicked off at Sega GameWorks locations June 20. Titled GameWorks Summer Games, the eight-week event (through Aug. 23) involves head-to-head battles on a variety of challenging games at GameWorks facilities in Seattle, Wash.; Ontario, Calif.; Grapevine, Texas; Tempe, Ariz.; and Las Vegas, Nev. Top weekly scorers will be invited to GameWorks for the local finals at the end of each weekly competition. Contestants of all ages are invited to participate.

Each location will honor one gold, silver, and bronze medal champion each week with one overall local gold medal winner receiving a year's worth of entertainment. All GameWorks guests may also enter the Summer Games Sweepstakes for a chance to win a Coca-Cola-sponsored trip to the Olympic Games 2000 in Australia. For more information, call (972)539-6757.

CORRECTION

In the feature "Capsules Capture Coins" that begins on page 110, Machine-O-Matic is one of the featured companies. However, the phone and fax were not on the list of suppliers at the end of the story on page 112. Please note: Machine-O-Matic can be contacted at (800)265-6772 or (905)836-4700; fax (905)836-4737.

IN THE ZONE

Sports Training and Entertainment Products and Startime Entertainment have signed an agreement to place four units of STEP's In the Zone basketball entertainment system, which simulates regulation basketball, in the recently opened Startime Family Entertainment Center. In addition, Startime will develop competitions, tournaments, leagues, and corporate events surrounding the one-of-a-kind basketball system to attract players.

Startime Family Entertainment Center is a super entertainment complex in Roswell, Ga., complete with a 10-plex cinema, two upscale restaurants, outside attractions including miniature golf, batting cages, fun carts, and arcades.

NEW CINCINNATI ADDRESS FOR ATLAS

Atlas Distributing's Cincinnati office has moved into a new facility. The company is now at 591 Northland Blvd., Cincinnati, OH 45240; 513)851-4100; (800)356-8055; fax (513)851-0502; parts fax (513)851-1308.

PLAYCORE ACQUIRES PENTES PLAY

Ft. Payne, Ala.,-based PlayCore announced its acquisition of Pentes Play, maker of soft modular playgrounds. Pentes Play will operate within PlayCore's GameTime Co. while maintaining its office in Charlotte, N.C. Robert Farnsworth, president of PlayCore said, "The strong heritage of GameTime's 70 years of experience coupled with the innovative young minds at Pentes Play will create a dynamic company with a promising future. We are looking forward to providing the best soft-contained play systems and best customer service."

You can reach PentesPlay/GameTime at (800)617)2158.

TBS ANNOUNCES PARTNERSHIP

TBS First Inc., a Tampa, Fla.-based manufacturer of retail ATMs has entered into a direct business partnership with WRG Services, a vending and amusement route operator since 1972.

Today, WRG is focused on distributing ATMs and maintaining and repairing equipment for all components of vending machines. WRG operates and services over 400 ATM terminals.

TBS ATM is the newest addition to the NCR Corp. entry level ATM family. For more information call (888)TBS-ATMS; Web site: (www.tbs-first.com).

IAFEC SILENT AUCTION

The International Association of Family Entertainment Centers' fifth annual silent auction has been designed to benefit 25-30 donors and give them the world wide recognition they deserve. The 1997 auction raised over $50,000 and funded IAFEC's fourth annual industry research report, Fun Expertise, Fun Fax, Fun Extra, and new manuals. IAFEC is the only trade association in the coin machine industry not funded through a trade show and must rely on membership dues and other sources of income. The Silent Auction Committee has compiled a "Donor Value Package" with 22 benefits. If you would like to support IAFEC's Silent Auction for Fun Expo '98, call (603)464-6497.

SNK'S XTREME RALLY

SNK is excited about the introduction of *Xtreme Rally*, the latest software for the new Hyper Neo-Geo 64 driving platform system. This software cartridge features eight new rally modified name brand vehicles and all new extensive tracks. Vehicles can crash, fishtail spin, and go airborne during the intense battle to become rally king of the road race circuit. For more information, contact SNK, (408)292-4550; fax (408)292-4271

MERIT'S RUN 21 PROGRAM

Merit Industries is offering its "Run 21" operator financing program through August 15. Through participating distributors, operators can purchase five or more *Megatouch* games, have no payments for six months, and then have 15 months to pay the balance.

What makes this finance program so valuable, according to the company, is that Merit is releasing a powerful summer enhancement, dubbed XL Super R5, that is included with each new game or upgrade kit purchase. The Super R5 contains a powerful new quiz game, Power Quiz, that offers players a snappier pace, more questions, added bonus questions, and an exciting screen presentation that's completely new and easier to play. The added appeal and value has enabled the game to be offered as a 50-cent play per person.

Also included with the Super R5 are four new symbol game versions of popular favorites, Tri-Towers, Chug 21, 11-Up, and Take 2. The new selections, originally designed for Oregon and Louisiana, are offered on the Strategy menu and the graphics add tremendous play appeal. Merit has also added a linked play feature for Puck Shot and an enhanced version of the popular Photo Hunt.

A summer special on CD ROM upgrade kits is available that provides one free kit for every five purchased through Merit distributors. With the new enhancements, Merit said that no operator should miss out on this great opportunity to upgrade all earlier *XL* games to the powerful Super R5 level.

Merit also noted that it hasn't forgotten about all the operators with *XL 5000s*. The factory is offering a free CD upgrade to Super R5 (nominal handling charge will apply) so that every location can benefit. It will work on all R5 level games.

For more information, contact Merit's sales department, (800)523-2760. ▲

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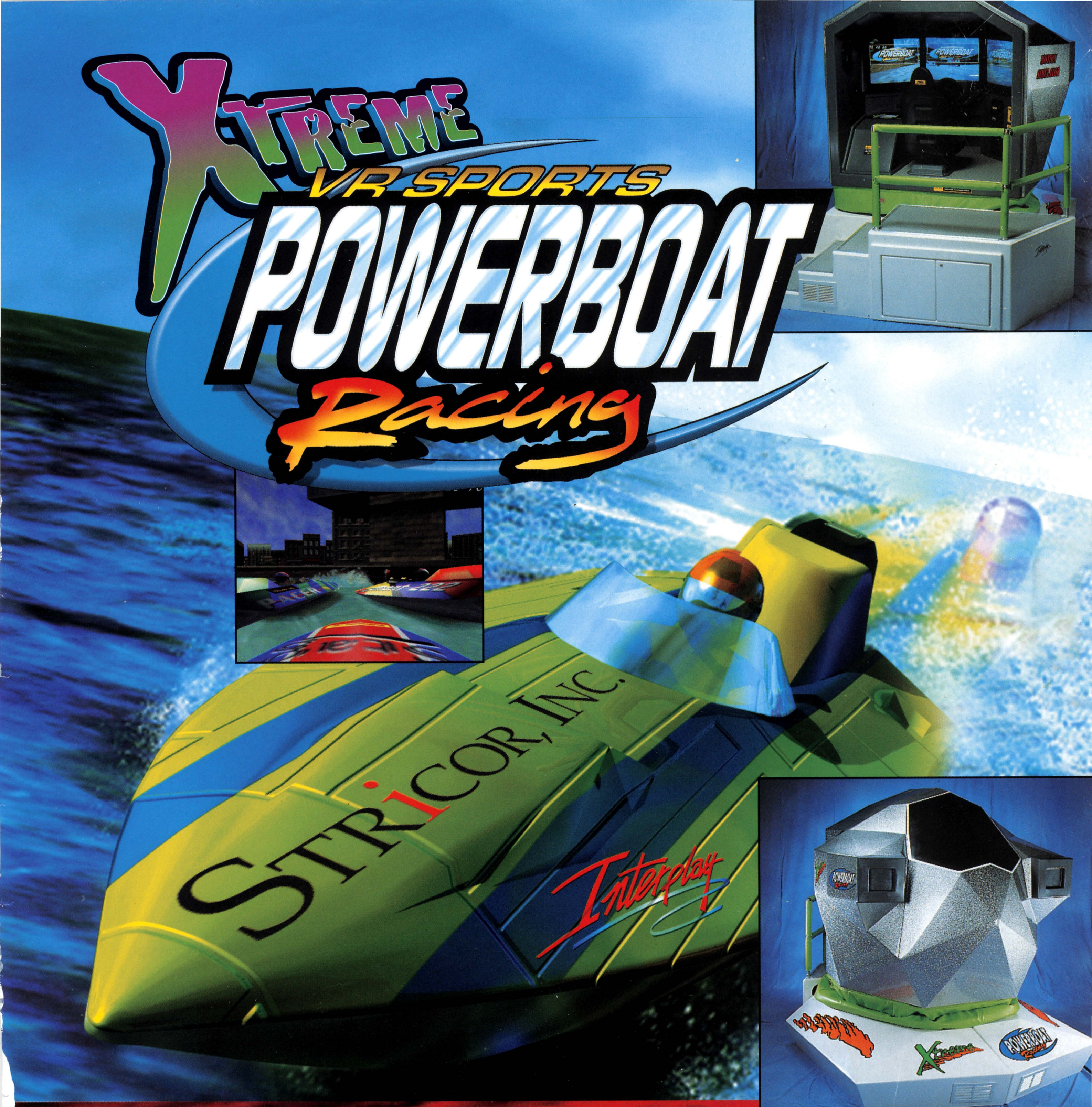
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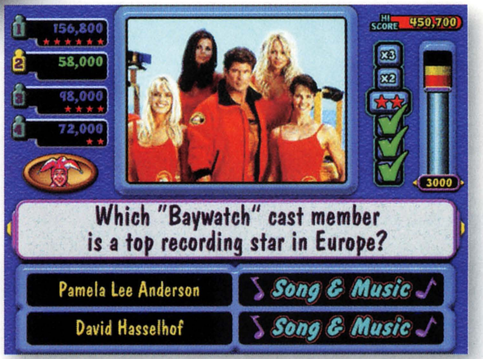
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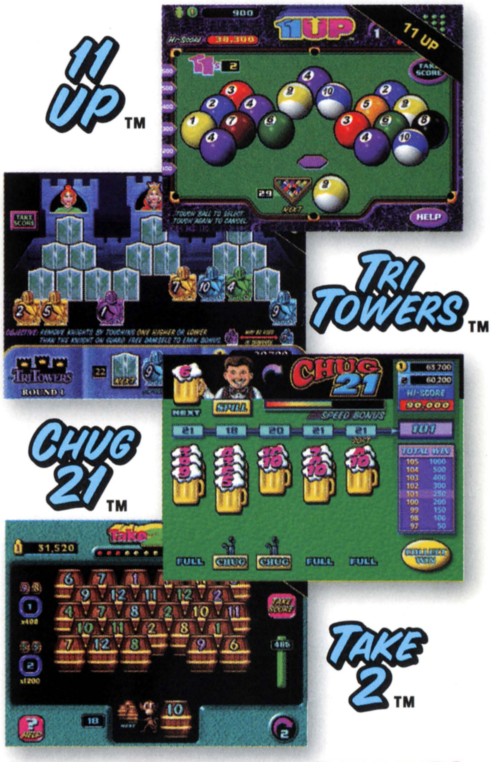
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CONTENTS

VOLUME 24
NO. 8
JULY 1998

Kids say the smartest things about entertainment. Page 98

FOR KIDS ONLY

66 THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS: E3
The word *overwhelming* isn't adequate. A first-time visit to E3 reveals what we're up against in software for PCs, home consoles, and the Internet.

78 HAPPY 25TH ANNIVERSARY, DYNAMO!
Modest beginnings didn't deter the little company in Texas that became an innovator. Get the full story and an interview with Bill Rickett.

96 FOR KIDS ONLY
From kiddie rides to capsule vendors and modular play structures to kid-friendly places, we've got the little ones covered.

114 FEC FOCUS: FLORIDA FUN PARK
Mike Greenwell's Bat-A-Ball and Family Fun Park has withstood the test of time and draws a diverse mix of guests to its attractions.

117 HELPFUL HINTS CONTEST
Dave Magaro Jr., of Magaro Machines describes his pinball repair odyssey. It's not too late for you to enter the contest!

129 COINMAN: LEE JENKINS
The new AMOA board member is a street operator who shares his views on leagues, jukeboxes, contracts, distributors, and more.

TECHNICIAN'S CORNER

148 TECHNICAL TOPICS
Randy Fromm, exclusive in *Play Meter*, sheds light on the pinball's lamp matrix in Williams and Sega games plus general pinball troubleshooting tips.

153 TICKET TECH
Vic Fortenbach looks at air compressors, balls, light bulbs, ball-loader assemblies, and ticket dispensers for classic Meltec games.

Fisherman's Bait
A Bass Challenge
KONAMI

Konami introduces a new video kit. Page 38

COVER

Award-winning Kiddie's Mfg. is proud of its kiddie ride line, especially licensed rides such as *Spider-Man, X-Men, NFL Helmet, Incredible Hulk, Harley-Davidson,* and the new interactive units featuring Looney Tunes characters slated for August introduction. Quality kiddie rides enhance the family image of a location, and to that end Kiddie's plans to continue developing new rides that will, as company founder, president, and CEO Eric Torres says, "transform education into interactive experiences for children presented in a format recognizable by both parents and children."

DEPARTMENTS

News Bulletin 3
From the Editor 12
Equipment Poll 14
Up Front 20
Coin-Op News 22
In Memory 44
Who's News 46
Beyond the Playfield 48
What's New 52
Cover Story 88
Off the Record 113
Scoring Success 121
State Show 122
Distributor Meeting 125
Open House 128
Grand Opening 135
Company Profile 137
The Legal Eagle 143
Game Room 146
Tax Tips 147
International Scene 156
Trade Accessories 160
Classified 163
Calendar 202

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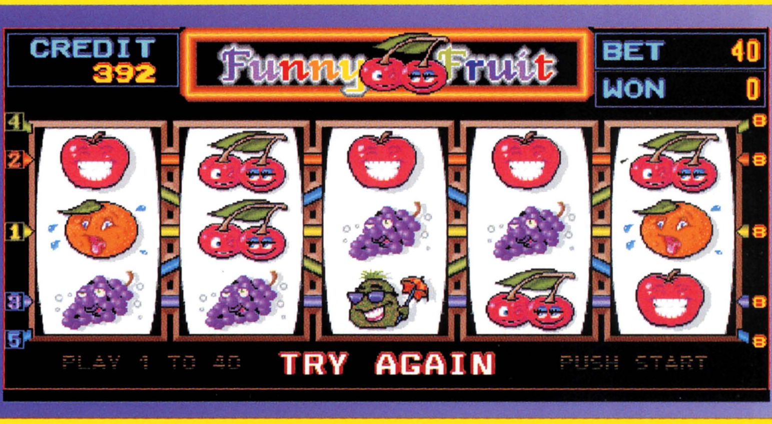
CREDIT 392
Funny Fruit
BET 40
WON 0
PLAY 1 TO 40
TRY AGAIN
PUSH START

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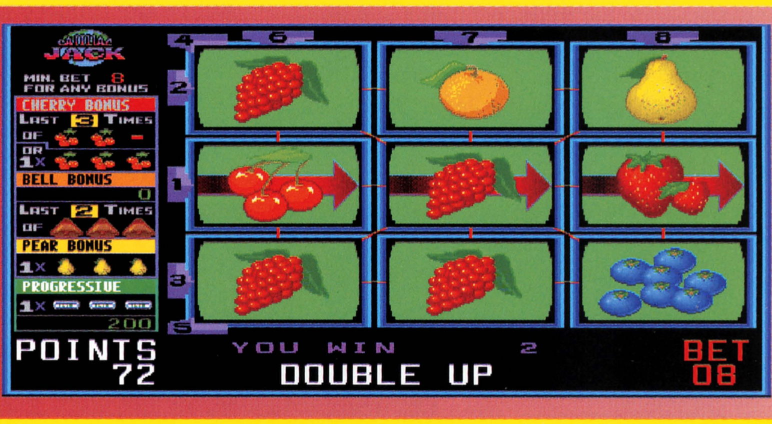
CADILLAC JACK
MIN. BET 8
FOR ANY BONUS
CHERRY BONUS
LAST 3 TIMES
OF
OR
1x
BELL BONUS
0
LAST 2 TIMES
OF
PEAR BONUS
1x
PROGRESSIVE
1x
200
POINTS
72
YOU WIN 2
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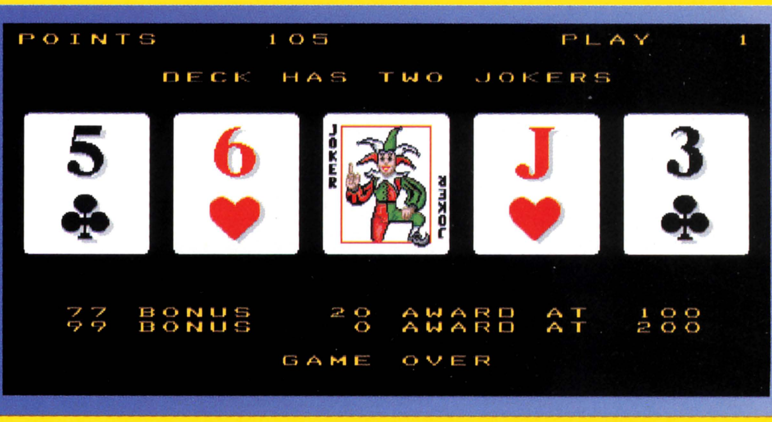
POINTS 105
PLAY 1
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99 BONUS 0 AWARD AT 200
GAME OVER

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Federal government out of line

I recently finished reading a copy of S.1451(the McCain bill regarding tobacco products including the ban on cigarette vending machines). As a lifelong Republican I am shocked and dismayed that one of my own party has seen fit to aid in the enlarging and abusive empowerment of the Federal government! It saddens me to see that the business of crushing legal American businesses is bipartisan. Suddenly, I and other people in my industry are a plague on the nation and must be forced or priced out of existence.

On the other hand, the government that allowed me to become dependent for my livelihood on this very same industry will continue to line their pockets with huge sums of money stolen from the hard working people in the tobacco industry. Cigarettes are bad for your health, but it never stopped the Federal government or the State of Florida from hungrily cashing my tax revenue checks. Does this mean they have a responsibility too? Nooooo. They're the good guys. It's those evil tobacco industry people.

I realize that in order to finance a utopian society you need to find even more money. I also realize that the government is having to work harder and harder at doing so because if they continue to raise the percentage of income a family must pay to Caesar, they are afraid the wheels may fall off of the cart and afraid they may find themselves hanging from the street lights (figuratively).

When the tobacco goose dies, and it will eventually, what legal American industry will be next to feed the insatiable appetite of the Federal government? People are dying from alcohol use, you know. Hmmmm, I think I'll stay out of the bar business. Hey, people are dying from heart attacks too, you know. Hmmmm, I think I'll stay out of the restaurant business too. Say, what business are you in?

Governor Lawton Chiles seems to think we in the tobacco industry are evil too. He claims the tobacco industry has cost our state billions of dollars in health care costs. I then, being a simple and fairly uneducated man (a graduate of Jefferson High School, but I spent most of my time avoiding the violence that was prevalent and cost my good friend Mark Hoffman some quality coma time) don't understand what happened to the billions and billions of dollars generated through the taxes paid by the tobacco industry. I guess the State wanted no part of that blood money. That still doesn't explain where the checks went. Somebody cashed them.

Oh, one more thing I don't understand. Let's see, is the State of Florida claiming that if these people that became sick due to smoking and therefore cost the state money had never smoked a tobacco product in their entire lives that they would have never, ever gotten sick or grown old and cost the state money? I don't think so. Can Governor Chiles say that he has ever met anyone who will not get sick or die? I don't think so. His argument sounds more like a moral issue than a financial one, but I suppose there is more money in a financial issue.

It seems that from the American Native and the African American to the Branch Davideans and the Florida fisherman, America has always needed someone to crush. And now me, my family, and my industry are in the spotlight of that very special group getting all the attention. If it's not you or your kind, you may very well be standing on the sidelines cheering this most American of sacrificial rites.

Please remember that most of us are decent, hard working people like you. We have mortgages, families, car payments, and pets. If America has decided that tobacco is too dangerous to our society, then let's just cut the crap, make it illegal, pay fairly the people you have deposed from a legal business, and get on with our lives. The whole thing can then just go down in the history books as one more freedom the American people willingly gave up. ▲

Ricardo J. DeForest
Blackjack Vending
Tampa, FL

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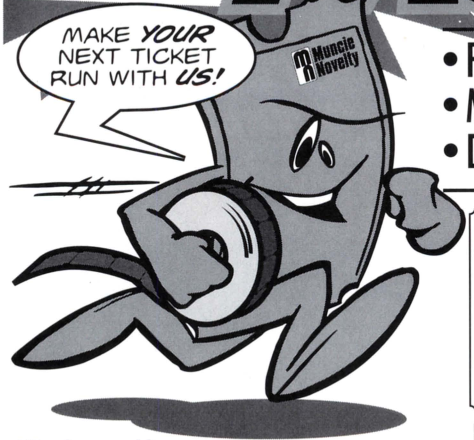
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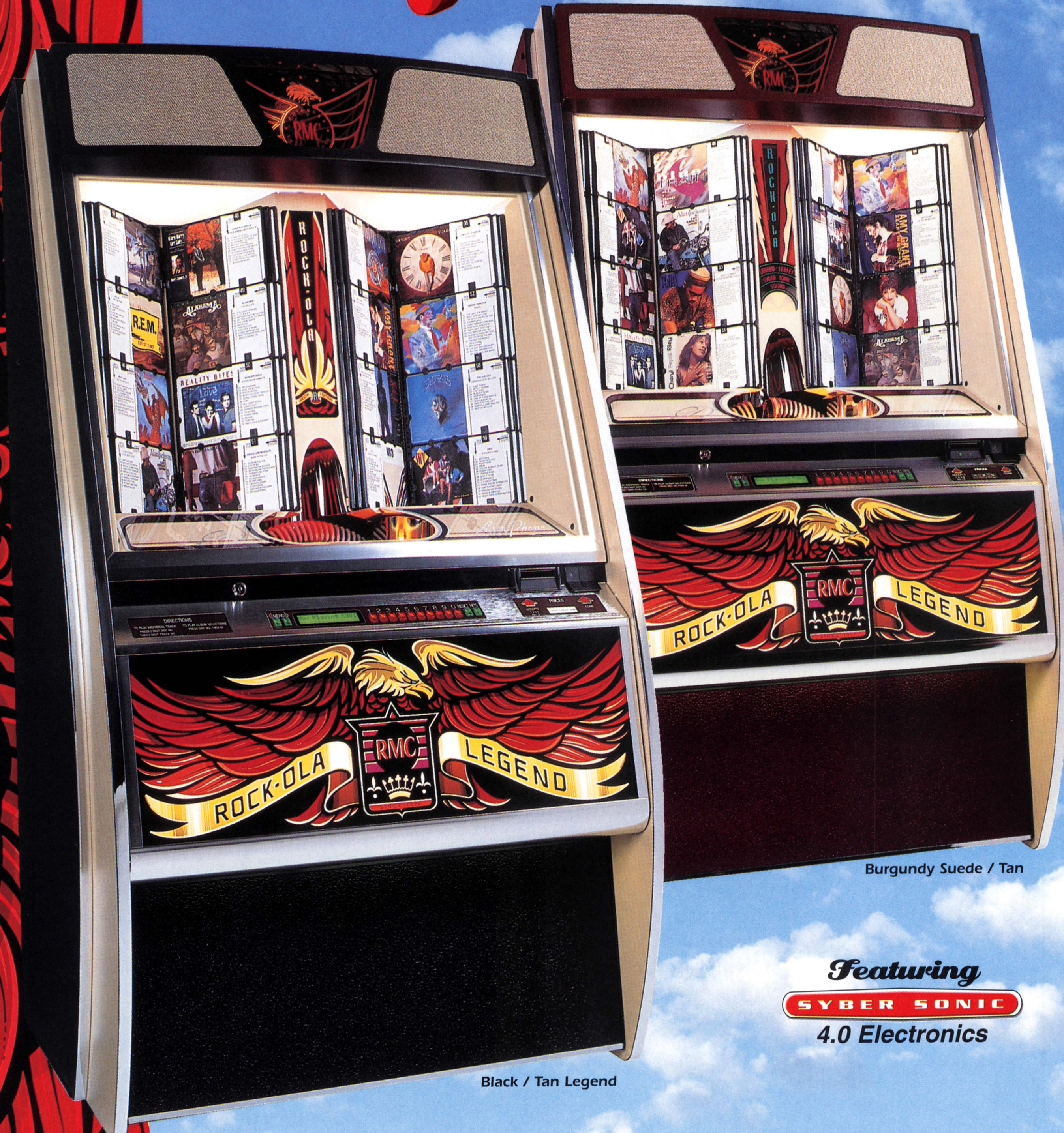
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JUKEBOXES

FROM THE **EDITOR**

We’ve come a long way from transistor radios

It was in the early ‘60s when I got my first transistor radio. I remember it so vividly with its snappy black leather case, bright orange cover, and big speaker on a little handheld body that gave it a futuristic look. I thought it was the best thing I’d ever seen. You could rock ‘n roll while you walked or rode your bike. I was in heaven. You know teenagers are always excited when it comes to music. The Beatles were hot but Bobby Vinton’s “Blue Velvet” could help you through a painful breakup (a common occurrence when you’re 14 or 15!). Johnny Mathis and the Beach Boys were other favorites. All that great music was portable!

Valerie Cognevich
Editor

For some reason, as I walked the floors of the E3 (Electronic Entertainment Expo) a few weeks ago, I kept thinking about that transistor radio. It kept reminding me of how far we’ve come in just 35 years in electronics and entertainment. Now we can fax, modem, e-mail, or phone home from anywhere with handheld units as small or smaller than my cherished transistor radio that only played music on an AM station often accompanied by interference! But I don’t know that we feel that sense of awe with each new innovation anymore. Rather than being amazed, we have come to expect it.

We’re not satisfied with just fast speeds on our computers; we want super duper, accelerated, lightning fast speed to get the information even quicker, to get the faxes on people’s desks before they hang up the phone, and find things on the Internet without waiting.

The E3 show was an awesome experience, especially for someone who grew up thinking transistor radios (no calculators yet) were hot stuff. Some of the bigger exhibitors like Sega, Namco, Nintendo, Capcom, GT Interactive, Midway, Intel, Microsoft, Electronic Arts, Konami, and PlayStation had booths so big they had reception desks to help attendees. One of the larger exhibitors confessed that they spent over $2 million to attend this show!

It was staggering to see first-hand what the consumer market has become. While very little at the show pertained to the coin-op/arcade game industry, it was jolting to truly understand why the coin-op game industry views the home market as a decided threat. There are literally hundreds of games trying to entice players to stay at home. There are add-on items to enhance the home experience like joysticks, gloves, cabinets, etc., that profess to make playing at home as fun as in the arcade. Signs dotted the exhibit floor boasting about arcade quality play.

Each time I saw one of these signs, I would convince myself that coin-op is still the “real thing.” But the technology and the games available for the home are pretty awe inspiring. When you see the numbers in the story under the “Through the Looking Glass” column, you’ll gasp. For instance, over 41,000 people registered for the show. Then there are the numbers from *Game Week* reporting sales of video game console software which topped $3.3 billion in 1997 and PC entertainment software sales of $1.8. That’s at total of $5.1 billion spent on games for the home. And those numbers are expected to rise considerably.

Seeing the number of people involved in home entertainment and the number of game developers seeking avenues for their creations, perhaps we’re going to be equally amazed at AMOA Expo this fall by the PC-based arcade games we’ve been promised and are starting to see. The trickle could turn into a flood of games for coin-op. We’ll keep you posted. ▲

We want to hear from you about any of the articles in this issue or topics you’s like to see. Phone: 504/488-7003; FAX: 504/488-7083; e-mail: (news@playmeter.com).

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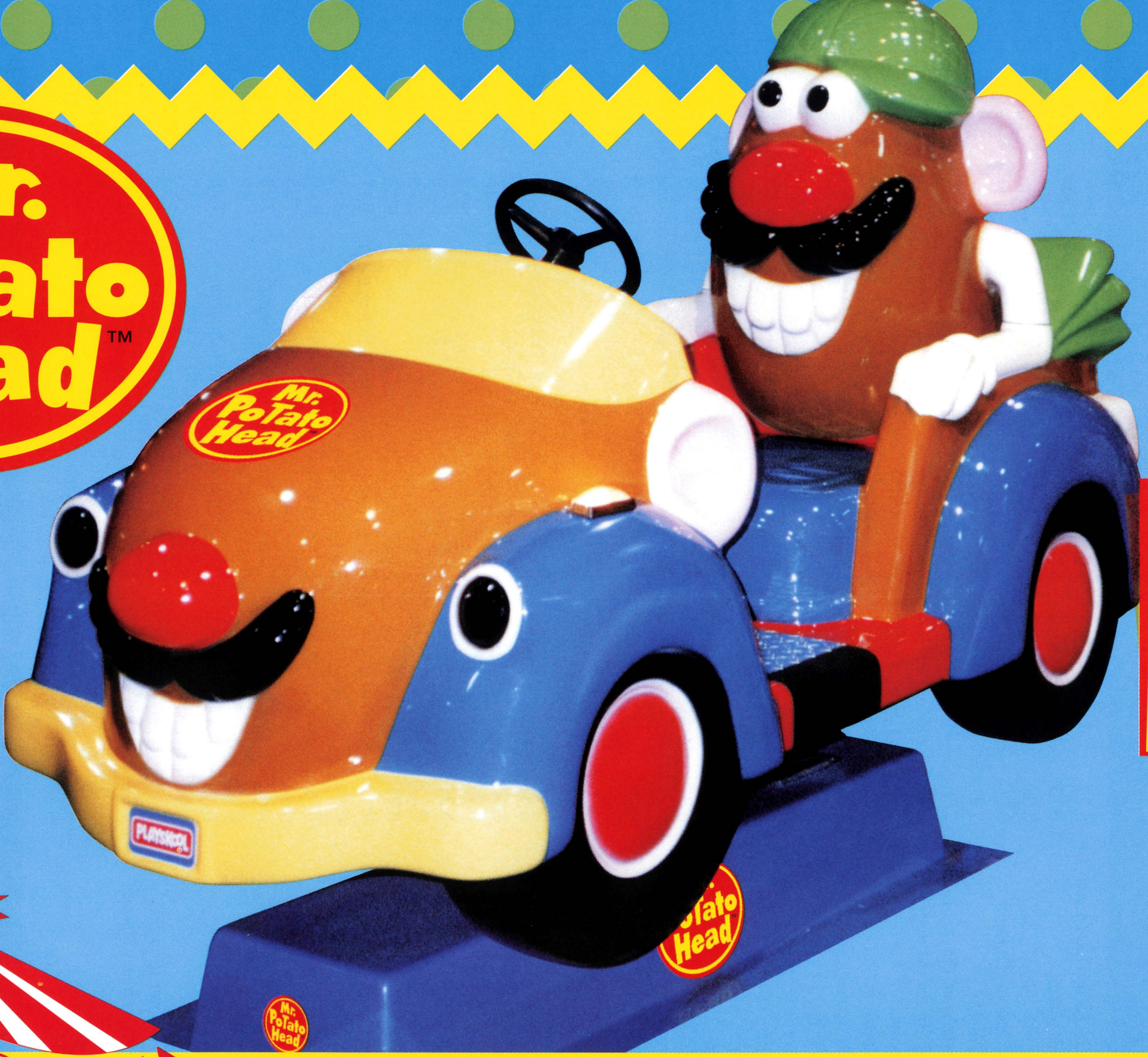

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RANKED #1 POLL**

"The Operators' Choice"

PLAY METER

Equipment Poll

VIDEO KITS

	GAME	POINT VALUE	LONG. POINTS	% OF RESP.
1.	Area 51/Max Force Duo *(Atari)*	8.27	101	23.64
2.	NFL Blitz *(Midway)*	8.13	380	47.27
3.	Golden Tee '98 *(Incred. Tech.)*	8.00	41	31.82
3.	Marvel vs. Capcom *(Capcom)*	8.00	172	32.73
5.	Tekken 3 *(Namco)*	7.91	712	51.82
6.	Bust-A-Move Again *(Taito)*	7.55	594	10.00
7.	Golden Tee '97 *(Incred. Tech.)*	7.45	561	44.55
8.	19XX *(Capcom)*	7.43	119	6.36
9.	Area 51 *(Atari)*	7.32	1483	66.36
10.	Point Blank *(Namco)*	7.25	801	10.91
10.	Super Puzzle Fighter II *(Capcom)*	7.25	70	3.64
12.	Sharpshooter *(P&P)*	7.00	7	8.18
13.	Police Trainer *(P&P)*	6.95	498	51.82
13.	Marvel Heroes vs SF *(Capcom)*	6.95	189	33.64
15.	Street Fighter EX *(Capcom)*	6.86	21	6.36
16.	D&D Shadow Over Mystara *(Capcom)*	6.80	201	4.55
17.	Surf Planet *(Gaelco)*	6.75	81	18.18
18.	Raiden Fighters 2 *(Fabtek)*	6.70	16	9.09
19.	Strikers 1945 Part 2 *(Worldwide)*	6.67	98	10.91
20.	Tournament Solitaire *(Dynamo)*	6.63	678	7.27
21.	Metal Slug 2 *(SNK)*	6.58	20	17.27
22.	Golden Tee 3D Golf *(Incred. Tech)*	6.51	1328	31.82
23.	Beastorizer *(Namco)*	6.45	✷	10.00
24.	Metal Slug *(SNK)*	6.42	418	32.73
25.	Raiden DX *(Fabtek)*	6.27	346	13.64
26.	Die Hard Arcade *(Sega)*	6.22	430	36.36
27.	X-Men vs. Street Fighter *(Capcom)*	6.21	333	34.55
28.	World Class Bowling *(Incred. Tech.)*	6.19	344	19.09
29.	S.F. III 2nd Impact *(Capcom)*	6.08	✷	10.91
30.	Strikers 1945 *(Worldwide)*	6.06	152	15.45
31.	Bust-A-Move *(SNK)*	6.04	483	43.64
31.	Lethal Enforcers *(Konami)*	6.04	1618	50.91
33.	Tekken 2 *(Namco)*	6.02	1037	40.91
34.	Real Bout 2 *(SNK)*	6.00	✷	4.55
34.	Samurai 64 *(SNK)*	6.00	✷	5.45
34.	Super Gem Fighter *(Capcom)*	6.00	✷	3.64
37.	Marvel Super Heroes *(Capcom)*	5.94	382	28.18
38.	Egg Venture *(ICE)*	5.91	10	20.91
38.	Raiden II *(Fabtek)*	5.91	785	20.00
40.	Aero Fighters 3 *(SNK)*	5.85	76	11.82

VIDEO DEDICATED

	GAME	POINT VALUE	LONG. POINTS	% OF RESP.
1.	Time Crisis II *(Namco)*	9.43	59	6.36
2.	House of the Dead *(Sega)*	8.37	676	24.55
3.	Tourn. 3D Golf *(Incred. Tech)*	7.46	734	21.82
4.	Gun Blade NY *(Sega)*	7.31	899	11.82
5.	Maximum Force *(Atari)*	7.17	580	41.82
6.	Time Crisis *(Namco)*	7.00	996	19.09
7.	Virtua Cop 2 *(Sega)*	6.76	900	19.09
8.	Virtual On *(Sega)*	6.43	151	12.73
9.	Solitaire Challenge *(Dynamo)*	6.28	1473	16.36
10.	Virtua Fighter 3 *(Sega)*	6.09	154	10.00
11.	Rampage World Tour *(Midway)*	6.08	80	21.82
12.	Virtua Fighter 2 *(Sega)*	5.92	930	10.91
13.	Mortal Kombat 4 *(Midway)*	5.88	168	39.09
14.	Killer Instinct 2 *(Midway)*	5.33	305	38.18
15.	Run and Gun 2 *(Konami)*	5.18	72	15.45

VIDEO SIMULATORS

	GAME	POINT VALUE	LONG. POINTS	% OF RESP.
1.	Wave Shark *(Konami)*	9.50	291	3.64
2.	The Lost World: J. Park *(Sega)*	9.13	415	21.82
3.	Top Skater *(Sega)*	8.95	652	20.00
4.	Rapid River *(Namco)*	8.60	56	4.55
5.	San Francisco Rush: Rock *(Atari)*	8.58	390	34.55
6.	Cruis'n World *(Midway)*	8.41	1023	58.18
7.	Teraburst *(Konami)*	8.40	62	4.55
8.	California Speed *(Atari)*	8.34	158	29.09
9.	Home Run Derby *(ICE)*	8.29	331	6.36
9.	Kick-It *(Inter. Light)*	8.29	106	6.36
11.	Sega Super GT *(Sega)*	8.25	456	7.27
12.	Harley-Davidson/LA Riders *(Sega)*	8.17	153	21.82
13.	Racing Jam *(Konami)*	8.13	43	7.27
14.	Winding Heat *(Konami)*	8.00	234	6.36
15.	Alpine Racer 2 *(Namco)*	7.95	765	20.00
16.	Daytona USA Limited *(Sega)*	7.88	391	7.27
17.	Wave Runner *(Sega)*	7.82	668	15.45
18.	Off Road Challenge *(Midway)*	7.79	428	30.91
19.	San Francisco Rush *(Atari)*	7.76	870	30.91
20.	Cyber Cycles *(Namco)*	7.53	1026	13.64
21.	Aqua Jet *(Namco)*	7.50	478	7.27
22.	Cruis'n USA *(Midway)*	7.43	2335	61.82
23.	Sega Rally *(Sega)*	7.33	808	5.45
24.	Daytona USA *(Sega)*	7.27	2481	40.00
25.	Tokyo Wars *(Namco)*	7.20	392	9.09

What the numbers mean:

Point Value—An average of the ratings that operators give each game they circle (on a scale of 3-10) on their Equipment Poll ballots.

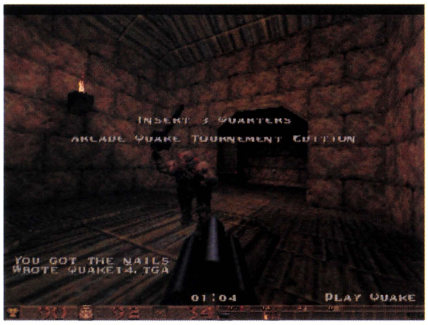
Longevity Points—Awarded after compiling a list of the top 60 videos and pinballs (combined) and compiling the top 60 redemption games (all categories combined). The #1 game gets 60 points, the #2 game gets 59 points, on down to the #60 game that gets 1 point. The higher the longevity points the better the "legs" of the game.

Percentage of Response—Amount of respondents who rated the games; another barometer of game success.

✷ New or reappearing games ✷✷Play Meter 1997 Reader Survey

Give Your Arcade "The Edge" In Fun

Quake® Arcade Tournament Edition



INSERT 3 QUARTERS
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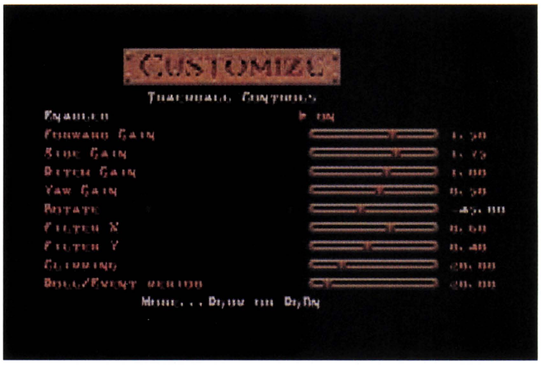
Quake® Arcade Tournament Edition will give your arcade "The Edge" in fun. For the first time ever the World's most popular PC Game, Quake is being introduced to the Arcade & LBE/FEC marketplace giving millions of Quake players a chance to compete head to head in your arcade. This exciting new release offers players the chance to compete on high end Intel OAA Pentium II computer systems from Quantum 3D.



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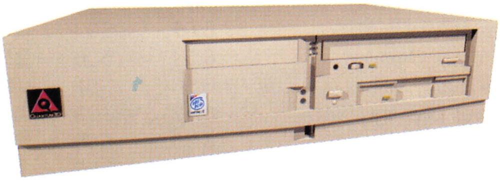

Quantum 3D Quicksilver 2

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RANKED #1 POLL**

"The Operators' Choice"

PLAY METER

Equipment Poll

REDEMPTION

	GAME	POINT VALUE	LONG. POINTS	% OF RESP.
	ALLEY BOWLERS			
1.	Basket Fever *(Bay Tek)*	8.57	504	6.36
2.	Pro Striker *(Design Plus)*	8.00	239	3.64
3.	Skee-Ball Too! *(Skee-Ball)*	7.67	597	8.18
4.	Bug Bash *(Bay Tek)*	7.17	678	5.45
5.	ICE Ball *(ICE)*	7.00	867	6.36
	SPORTS GAMES			
1.	Super Shot *(Skee-Ball)*	7.80	869	9.09
2.	Full Court Fever *(ICE)*	7.11	834	8.18
3.	Hoop Shot *(ICE)*	6.71	306	6.36
4.	Hoop It Up *(Atari)*	6.60	1069	18.18
5.	Full Court Frenzy *(ICE)*	6.42	467	17.27
6.	Shoot to Win *(Smart)*	6.41	658	15.45
7.	Rage 'N Cage *(Skee-Ball)*	6.40	308	4.55
8.	UB-QB Football *(Skee-Ball)*	6.11	127	16.36
9.	Slugfest *(Williams)*	6.00	7	11.82
10.	Putting Challenge II *(G.L. Tech.)*	5.20	51	4.55
	SINGLE CRANES			
1.	Rainbow *(Rainbow)*	8.80	1248	9.09
2.	Classic Watch Crane *(Smart)*	7.36	944	10.00
3.	Clean Sweep *(Smart)*	7.33	1127	30.00
3.	Showcase *(Smart)*	7.33	81	5.45
5.	Mission Crane *(Mission Crane)*	7.25	92	3.64
6.	Lax *(Noel Industries)*	6.67	41	8.18
7.	Big Choice *(Fun Merchants)*	6.53	761	15.45
8.	Candy Crane *(Smart)*	6.31	489	29.09
9.	Candy Man *(Fun Merchants)*	6.20	251	4.55
10.	Pit Stop *(Smart)*	6.00	144	3.64
11.	Skill Crane *(Grayhound)*	5.89	392	8.18
12.	Snack Attacker/Challenger *(AGE)*	5.80	611	4.55
13.	Jumbo Crane *(Grayhound)*	5.43	709	6.36
	CHILD-SIZE GAMES			
1.	Shoot To Win! Jr. *(Smart)*	7.33	807	5.45
2.	Mini Dunx *(ICE)*	7.13	312	7.27
3.	Hightops *(Skee-Ball)*	7.00	212	5.45
4.	Skee-Toss B.C. *(Skee-Ball)*	6.63	28	7.27
5.	Bozo Grand Prize *(ICE)*	6.33	43	5.45
6.	Feed Big Bertha *(Smart)*	6.06	309	16.36
7.	Hungry, Hungry Hippos *(ICE)*	5.40	26	9.09
8.	Bozo Basketball *(Design Plus)*	5.33	98	5.45
9.	The Flintstones *(ICE)*	5.00	218	3.64
	ROLL DOWNS			
1.	Pizza Roll *(Bay Tek)*	7.25	57	3.64
2.	Spin To Win *(Lazer-Tron)*	7.00	938	20.00
3.	Jungle Rama *(Lazer-Tron)*	6.60	379	4.55
4.	Clown Roll Down *(Bay Tek)*	6.57	197	12.73
5.	Rock N Roll *(Bay Tek)*	6.40	106	4.55
6.	Jungle Picnic *(Bay Tek)*	6.14	1	6.36
7.	Roll Down *(Bay Tek)**	5.00	82	4.55

	GAME	POINT VALUE	LONG. POINTS	% OF RESP.
	NOVELTY			
1.	Claim Jumper *(Benchmark)*	8.82	167	10.00
2.	Cyclone *(ICE)*	8.78	1817	37.27
3.	Pop-A-Tac-Toe *(Coastal)*	8.50	101	3.64
4.	Surfin' Safari *(5 Star)*	8.44	587	8.18
5.	Dinoscore *(Planet Earth)*	7.96	1516	20.91
6.	Solar Spin *(Lazer-Tron)*	7.86	697	6.36
7.	Colorama *(Bromley)*	7.71	1357	12.73
8.	Treasure Falls *(Planet Earth)*	7.50	1035	14.55
9.	Cyclone Jr. *(ICE)*	7.43	1056	6.36
10.	Round 'n Round *(Astro)*	7.13	994	7.27
11.	Steer Crazy *(Fun Industries)*	7.00	198	4.55
12.	Pirate's Revenge *(5 Star)*	6.83	354	5.45
13.	Prize Zone *(Lazer-Tron)*	6.14	337	6.36
14.	Simple Simon *(Sammy USA)*	6.08	131	10.91
15.	Sidewinder *(Bob)*	6.00	✷	3.64
16.	Cosmo Gang *(Data East)*	5.91	2	10.00
17.	Pop-A-Slot *(Coastal)*	5.83	311	5.45
18.	Hop-A-Tic-Tac-Toe *(Data East)*	5.59	46	15.45
19.	Pop-A-Ball *(Coastal)*	5.52	84	20.91
20.	Dump the Ump *(ICE)*	5.00	120	9.09
	COIN DROP GAMES			
1.	Big Haul *(Benchmark)*	8.63	1086	31.82
2.	Smokin' Token *(Seidel)*	8.43	1493	20.91
3.	Goin' Rollin' *(Seidel)*	7.86	1053	6.36
4.	Wheel 'M In *(Bromley)*	7.16	1361	17.27
5.	Twister *(Lazer-Tron)*	7.00	150	7.27
6.	The Mask *(Data East)*	6.67	803	8.18
7.	Rock-N-Bowl *(Bromley)*	6.54	500	25.45
8.	Addams Family Values *(Midway)*	6.50	351	5.45
9.	Coin Circus *(Sammy USA)*	6.42	309	10.91
10.	Cut the Cheese *(Sega)*	6.33	665	8.18
11.	Aftershock *(Lazer-Tron)*	6.00	580	10.91
12.	Roll For Gold *(Benchmark)*	5.88	373	7.27
13.	Super Bank It II *(Lazer-Tron)*	5.83	271	5.45
14.	Home Run Hitter *(CCI)*	5.79	616	17.27
	GUN GAMES			
1.	Water Game *(Bob)*	8.50	490	3.64
2.	Big Mouth *(Meltec)*	6.40	153	9.09
3.	Knock-Down *(Meltec)*	6.31	116	11.82
4.	Miner's Revenge *(Lazer-Tron)*	6.20	174	4.55
	BOPPING/STOMPING GAMES			
1.	Spider Stompin *(Island)*	7.29	1238	15.45
2.	Circus Hi-Rise *(Skee-Ball)*	7.00	271	4.55
3.	Ribbit Racin *(Lazer-Tron)*	6.96	884	25.45
4.	Whac-A-Mole *(Bob's Space Racers)*	6.50	199	16.36
5.	Swamp Stomp *(Lazer-Tron)*	6.29	592	6.36
6.	Wacky Gator *(Data East)*	6.00	475	22.73
7.	Demolition Zone *(Skee-Ball)*	5.75	35	3.64

*****Play Meter 1997 Reader Survey***

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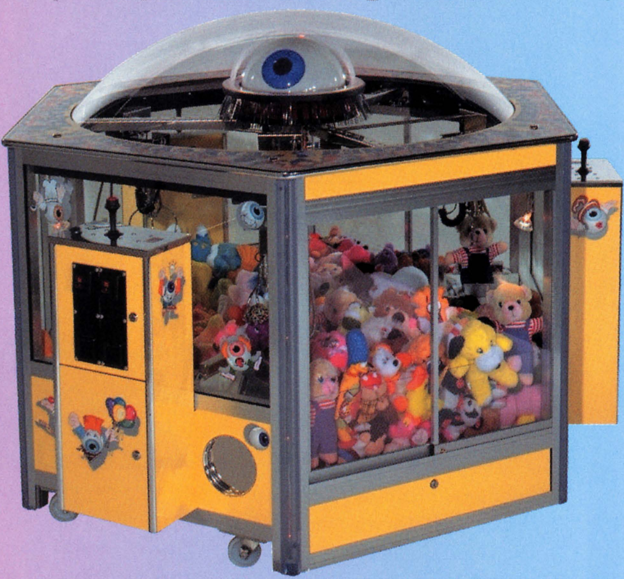

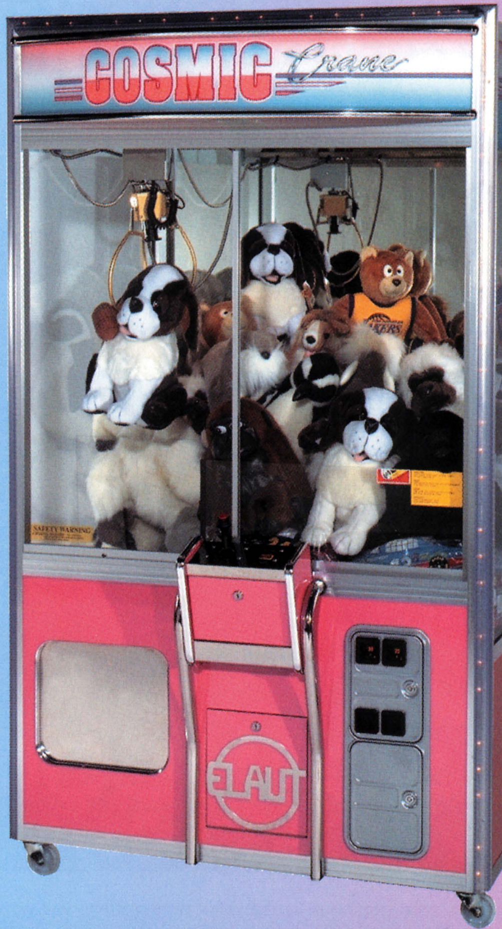
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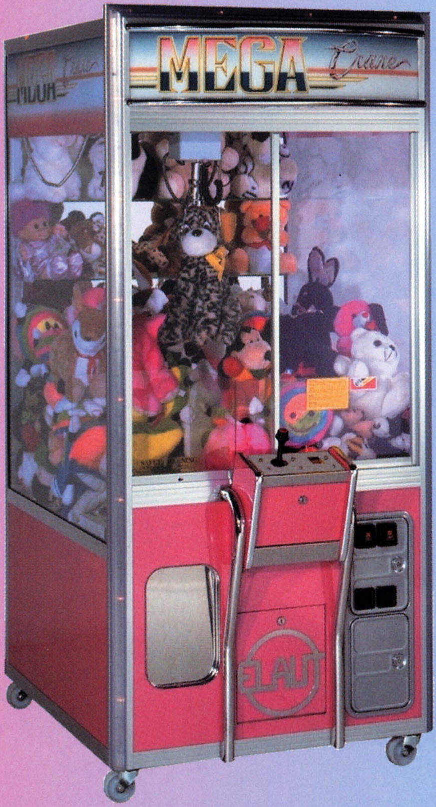
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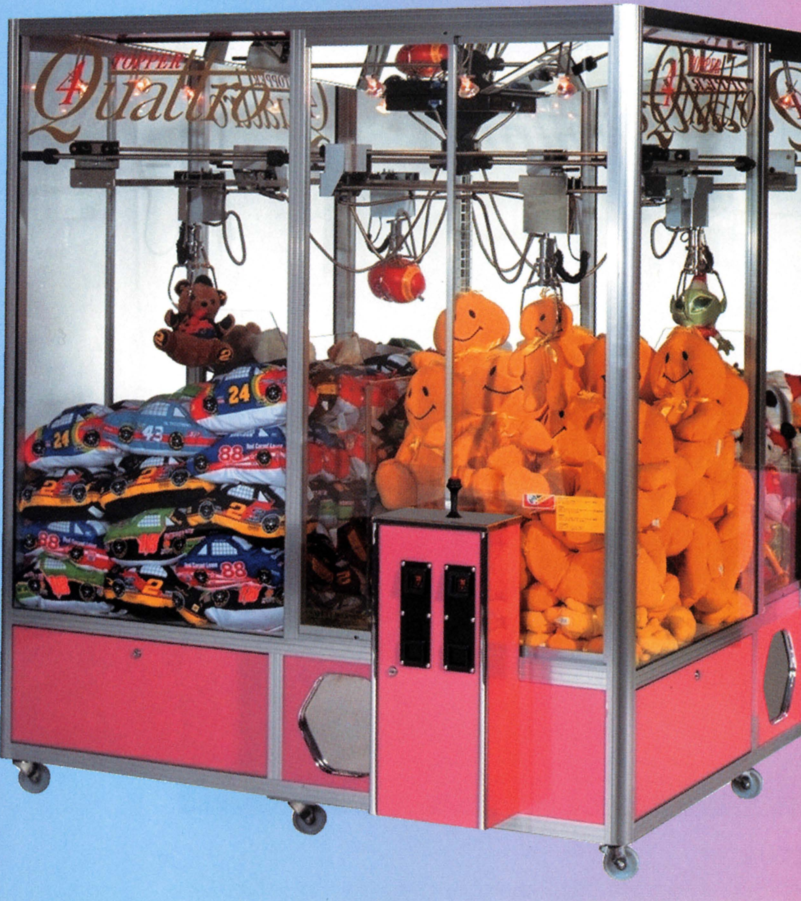
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"The Operators' Choice"

PLAY METER

Equipment Poll

PRIZE VENDORS

GAME	POINT VALUE	LONG. POINTS	% OF RESP.
1. Sports Arena *(Sammy USA)*	7.93	165	25.45
2. Key Catcher *(Sammy USA)*	7.43	143	6.36
3. Kick n Catch *(Fun Industries)*	6.33	1	5.45
4. Copy Cat *(Fun Industries)*	5.80	✷	4.55

PINBALLS

GAME	POINT VALUE	LONG. POINTS	% OF RESP.
1. Medieval Madness *(Williams)*	8.25	512	25.45
2. Viper Night Drivin' *(Sega)*	7.75	90	7.27
3. No Good Golfers *(Williams)*	7.38	131	11.82
4. Attack From Mars *(Bally)*	7.36	1184	38.18
5. Independence Day *(Sega)*	7.30	307	9.09
6. Star Wars Trilogy *(Sega)*	7.27	206	13.64
7. The Addams Family *(Bally)*	7.22	3543	50.00
8. Theatre of Magic *(Bally)*	7.00	1393	36.36
8. X-Files *(Sega)*	7.00	123	13.64
10. Scared Stiff *(Bally)*	6.88	715	23.64
11. Arabian Nights *(Williams)*	6.87	538	13.64
12. Starship Troopers *(Sega)*	6.70	✷	9.09
13. World Cup Soccer *(Bally)*	6.61	1055	28.18
14. Fast Break *(Bally)*	6.56	71	14.55
15. Star Trek: TNG *(Williams)*	6.35	1744	30.91

COUNTERTOPS

1. Megatouch XL *(Merit)*	8.52	787	41.82
2. Megatouch 5 *(Merit)*	7.64	402	30.00
3. Megatouch IV *(Merit)*	7.52	1193	26.36
4. Megatouch Tournament *(Merit)*	7.18	770	10.00
5. Touchmaster *(Midway)*	7.07	697	24.55
6. Global Touch HD *(Micro)*	6.86	16	6.36
7. Magical Touch 3 *(Micro)*	6.67	147	10.91

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

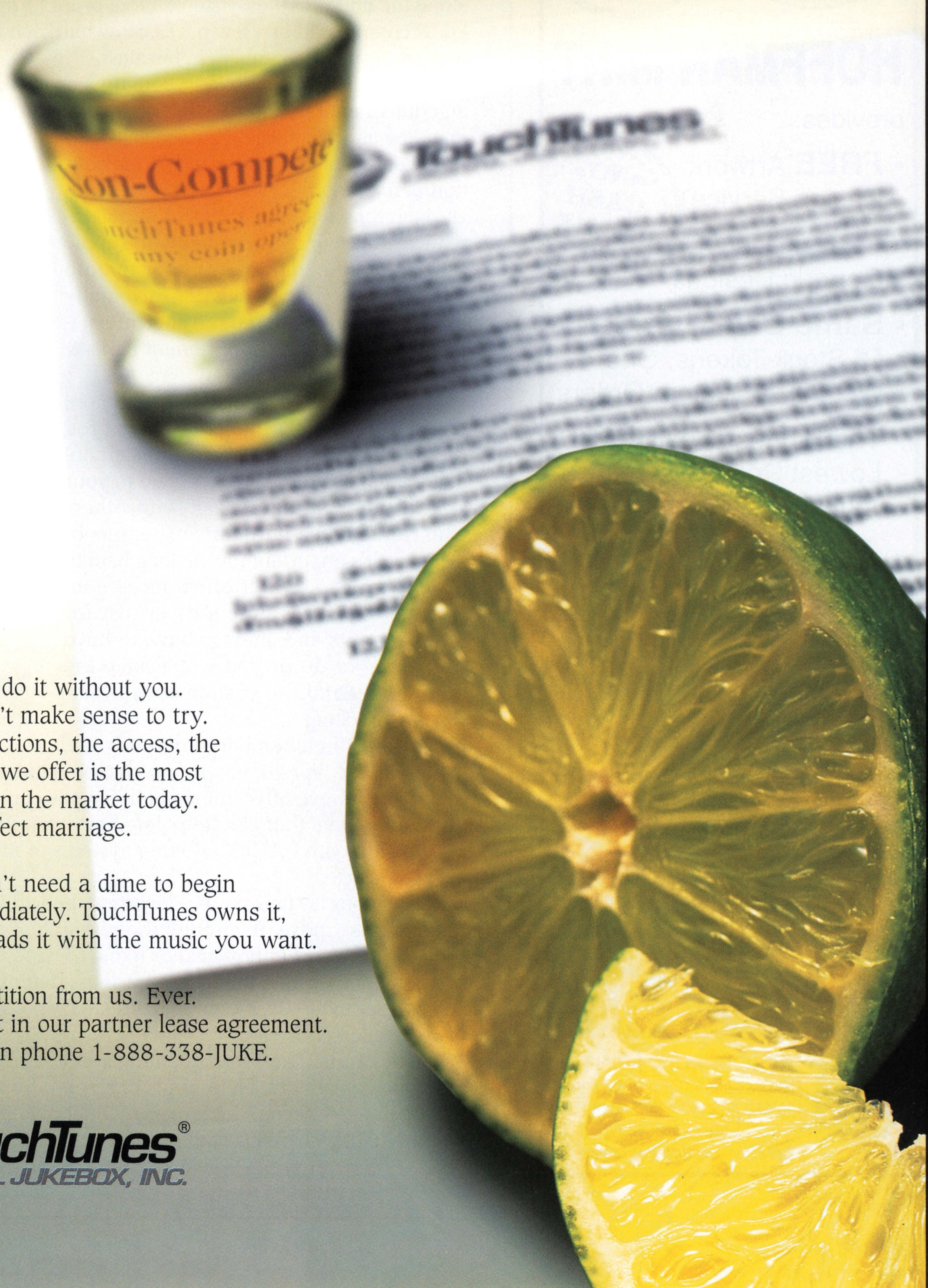
Less than 1% named their favortie photo booth/sticker machine. Here are the ones they named.

Polaroid Photo Booth, Hollywood Photo Booth (Smart), Sticker Mania (Namco), Auto Photo, Neo Print (SNK), Photo Friends (Konami), Photo Vend

In order to accommodate the influx of new games on the ballot we are discontinuing the Classic Video category. All-time favorites such as *Ms Pac-Man* are universally recognized and will always have a dedicated following. We applaud the impact these classics have had on the industry; they have earned a place in the Coin-Op Hall of Fame.

Due to the popularity of the new Prize Vendors we have added a category for that equipment.

Some Things Just Go Down Smoother With A Little Help.



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So you want to get into the amusement business?

We've heard it before: "I'm thinking of getting into the arcade business," says the caller. "I just need to know how to get started." The caller is thinking along the lines of 10 easy steps, a fool-proof formula, everything you need to know compressed in a few pages. How hard can it be? Rent a place and fill it with games I like. Bam! I'm in business.

On our end we're thinking: Pull up a chair and spend a few days getting an education about a business that's challenging and fun, true, but also demanding and not always as financially rewarding as expected.

Bonnie Theard
Managing Editor

Recently I got a call from someone considering opening a children's entertainment center. This prospective owner/operator wanted information on security measures, which I was happy to supply as best I could, and referred her to both the International Association of Family Entertainment Centers and the International Association of Amusement Parks & Attractions

In good conscience I had to add: Before you jump into anything seriously, you should travel to trade shows to see equipment, attend seminars that pertain to your area of interest, and speak with others who run family entertainment centers of all types. It's important for the long haul to have a fun center that offers more than something just for little kids or just for teens. Parents and siblings have to have something to do or you won't have the traffic flow, and the customers won't be staying very long.

Do invest in a demographic study and look at all the types of entertainment competition in your area. The associations listed above offer information for newcomers like you. Ask for everything they have that can help you. For example, the IAFEC has formed a partnership with CACI Marketing Systems to offer a site location and marketing package.

Doing your homework and investing time and money in the research process is a wise move. If, after all the research is compiled and analyzed, the project is deemed impractical or likely to encounter rough times, you have avoided a larger investment in a business that may not prosper. While there are no guarantees, lack of proper research and planning have contributed to many a failed endeavor.

Lastly, understand that opening any type of amusement facility is not a one-time investment. Hold funds in reserve for improving the physical site, adding new attractions, advertising, obtaining updated demographic studies, and frequently changing coin-op games. That's just the beginning. ▲

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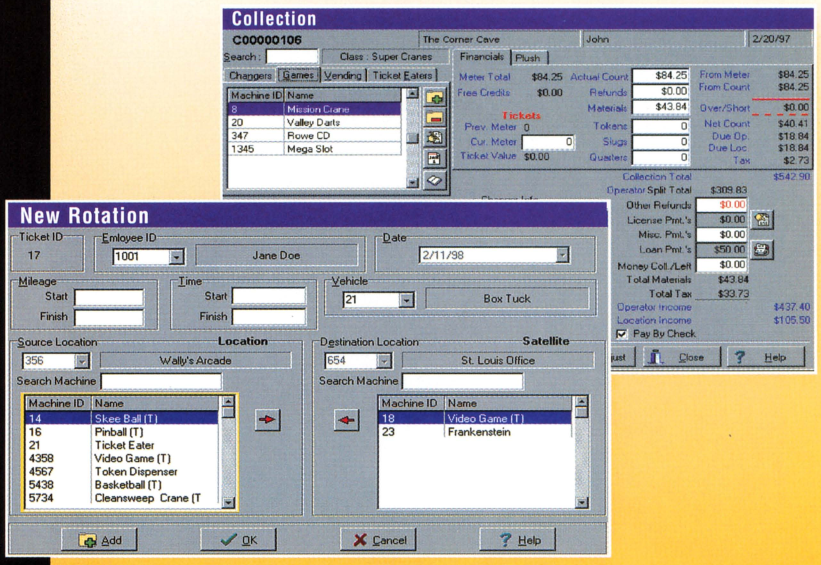
Collection
Changers
Games
Vending
Ticket Eaters
Financials
Plush
Close
Help
New Rotation
Add
OK
Cancel
Help

C00000106 | The Corner Cave | John | 2/20/97

Search:

Class : Super Cranes

Machine ID	Name
8	Mission Crane
20	Valley Darts
347	Rowe CD
1345	Mega Slot

Meter Total $84.25
Free Credits $0.00
Tickets
Prev. Meter 0
Cur. Meter 0
Ticket Value $0.00
Actual Count $84.25
Refunds $0.00
Materials $43.84
Tokens 0
Slugs 0
Quarters 0
From Meter $84.25
From Count $84.25
Over/Short $0.00
Net Count $40.41
Due Op. $18.84
Due Loc. $18.84
Tax $2.73
Collection Total $542.90
Operator Split Total $309.83
Other Refunds $0.00
License Pmt.'s $0.00
Misc. Pmt.'s $0.00
Loan Pmt.'s $50.00
Money Coll./Left $0.00
Total Materials $43.84
Total Tax $33.73
Operator Income $437.40
Location Income $105.50
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Ticket ID 17
Emloyee ID 1001 Jane Doe
Date 2/11/98
Mileage Start Finish
Time Start Finish
Vehicle 21 Box Tuck
Source Location 356 Location Wally's Arcade
Search Machine

Machine ID	Name
14	Skee Ball (T)
16	Pinball (T)
21	Ticket Eater
4358	Video Game (T)
4567	Token Dispenser
5438	Basketball (T)
5734	Cleansweep Crane (T

Destination Location 654 Satellite St. Louis Office
Search Machine

Machine ID	Name
18	Video Game (T)
23	Frankenstein

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COIN-OP NEWS

Action alert for cigarette vendors

Terry Davis and Mark Levine, chairmen of AMOA's Tobacco Committee, sent an Action Alert to AMOA members giving an update on the McCain Bill, S.1415. This Senate Commerce Committee tobacco legislation was recently approved in committee by a vote of 19-1 and has now been brought to the Senate floor. While a final vote on the bill could have been as early as the last week of May, they are still waiting for Senate response.

To recap, the bill includes "fair market value" compensation for tobacco vending machine owners through the Tobacco Vending Reimbursal Corp. This was a significant victory and was a direct result of an effective grassroots effort by cigarette vending machine operators. Davis and Levine said that operators did a great job in the Senate Commerce Committee and now they are imploring operators to apply their efforts to the full Senate because, as they noted, "Senate floor votes are unpredictable. No provision is safe without a majority of support from the full Senate, and an amendment may be brought to strip our provision out of the bill."

Play Meter talked with Levine who said that he is expecting more debates on this during the summer and commended operators for their efforts. He said, "I would like to advise operators to be cautiously aware of what they read in the papers on this. There has been a lot of posturing by individuals that has appeared in print, but what's here today may not be the case tomorrow. There's more behind the scenes; the battle is far from over. There's a lot of smoke (no pun intended!) and mirrors."

Operators should continue their support and efforts by contacting their legislators. Here's the address: The Honorable (insert your senator's name), United States Senate, Washington, D.C., 20510. Levine and Davis encourage operators to "explain what a ban on vending machines without compensation will mean to you and your business. Ask them to please support the vendor compensation provision now included in S.1415. You can remind them that the provision was accepted by the Senate Commerce Committee UNANIMOUSLY."

Sales of Cigarettes to
MINORS
are
FORBIDDEN
by Law. We support this law. Help prevent and report violations to us.
The Management

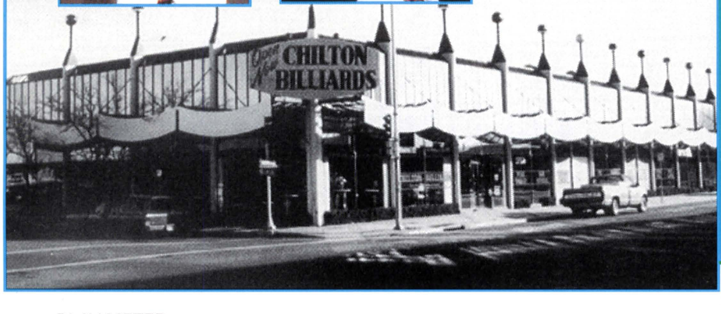
These signs are used by operators to forbid minors from buying cigarettes from vending machines.

Chilton and Sugarloaf reach agreement

When you call Chilton Vending and the receptionist answers with Sugarloaf, don't be surprised; you do have the right number. Chilton Vending has entered into an agreement with Boulder, Colo.-based American Coin Merchandising Inc., which does business as Sugarloaf.

The agreement does not affect Chilton Billiards operations or assets. Chilton Billiards will continue as a Chilton-owned entity serving the greater Wichita area with high-quality home recreational products. Randy Chilton will become vice president of amusement operations for Sugarloaf. Stan Chilton will stay active in Chilton Billiards. Both Stan and Randy assured their current customers that they will still be serviced by the same people doing the same things. The only difference, they noted, would be a noticeable increase in new equipment. "A lot more equipment will be coming through Wichita than ever before because of Sugarloaf's expansion plans. Wichita is where the amusement machines will be staged before being shipped out," Randy said.

Randy sent a letter to AMOA to assure them that he will fulfil all of his obligations at AMOA. "I will continue to work with



Left: Randy Chilton

Right: Stan Chilton

Below: Chilton Billiards is not affected by the agreement.

See **CHILTON AND SUGARLOAF** *on page 24*

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League Tracker lets me run my leagues from the comfort and convenience of my office. Everything I used to do in person, I now do over a modem!

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- New software updates? I simply download from Merit's website and update all my DXs. *No chip changes required!*
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** League Tracker imports Valley League Machine and Arachnid Dartman files.*

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Your computer may turn into a pumpkin

Coin ConneXion, route management software specialists, noted that the so-called millennium bug could be a rude shock to a lot of people when their computers experience the ultimate in computer glitches when the clock rolls forward to the year 2000.

So what exactly is this millennium bug? Until recently most computers and software programs used a date format like 1/1/98 for Jan. 1, 1998. As far as these computers are concerned, JFK was assassinated 11/22/63 BEFORE the Declaration of Independence was signed 7/4/76. On Jan. 1, 2000, the date in these computers and programs will read 1/1/00, which will be interpreted as Jan. 1, 1900.

Coin ConneXion explained the significance of this. Your bank might think that a payment due in 2000 is actually 100 years overdue. A phone call placed on Dec. 31, 1999 might appear to have ended on Jan. 1, 1900. People 103 years old may get enrollment information on kindergartens because a computer thinks they are only three years old. And that's just the beginning. There will be major problems with the days of the week. Jan. 1, 1900 was a Monday while Jan. 1, 2000 will be a Saturday. For weekday-sensitive systems such as automated bank safe doors and rush-hour traffic lights it could be a nightmare.

Could it possibly really be that big of a problem? The Gartner Group, a highly respected computer consulting firm, thinks it could be even worse than we think. They have estimated that fixing the Year 2000 problem could cost as much as $600 BILLION. It could be the biggest single information project the world has ever faced.

What does all this mean to amusement operators? Route management and accounting systems will be affected since they are date sensitive. Coin ConneXion advises operators to check with the providers of their application software to see if it is ready for the millennium. If an operator is using software that is no longer sold or supported, check throughout the program for date formats using two-digit years. If such formats appear, you may need to consider new software.

John Mette at Coin ConneXion said that it is not too soon to start preparing yourself to avoid a nasty surprise. He has information on how to test your software and will share that information with you. He can be reached at his Web site (www.coincnx. com), e-mail (jmette@coincnx.com), or phone (605)331-5575.

Data East closes doors

Mr. Tetsuo Fukuda, president of Data East Corp., announced, "It is not without regret that Data East has made the decision to close its amusement division in the United States while concentrating on other projects that will be unveiled sometime in the near future."

The office officially closed at the end of May and no definite date for reopening has been announced. To continue to support product currently in the field, Data East has made arrangements for parts to be distributed through Linda Chang, DAX Technology, 131 Falcato Dr., Milpitas, CA 95035; (408)942-8617; fax (408)942-0727.

Service and technical support will be handled by Todd Townsend, Sutherlin Service & Electronics, 118 East Central, Sutherlin, OR 97479; (541)459-0189 or (541)459-0123.

Beach blanket foosball

Move over Annette Funicello and Frankie Avalon...it's Ann Winfield of Ralph's Automatic and Jim Niblock of Canadian Coin Machine enjoying a game of foosball on the beach in the Dominican Republic during the recent Namco distributor meeting. Talk about new locations!

Chilton and Sugarloaf

continued from page 22

AMOA and it's a commitment fully supported by Sugarloaf," Randy told *Play Meter.*

In a letter to its customers Chilton explained that Chilton Vending has grown significantly both financially and geographically in the past five years and has key personnel with expertise in helping customers. Combining these factors with Sugarloaf's service infrastructure and capital position was a match that fit like a glove, according to the company.

Sugarloaf, formerly a private company, is now publicly traded. Today it operates some 10,000 skill cranes throughout the United States and boasts annual sales of over $60 million. Randy explained that he'll have an opportunity to develop a category of equipment (arcade amusement and redemption) that is non-existent at Sugarloaf now.

Sugarloaf corporate offices will remain in Boulder, while Randy will head up the Wichita office which will remain at the Chilton Vending address: 300 S. Topeka, Wichita, Kan., 67202. Randy can be reached at (316)262-3538.

Ladies and gentlemen start your profits.

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Ascension fine tunes laser tag systems

Ascension Productions, manufacturers of Lazer Runner laser tag systems, is into the second year of producing its Radio Frequency Laser Tag System that features improved electronics and new peripherals.

The system offers a new Sentry Pod device that boasts voice commands such as "intruder detected" and is illuminated by multicolored LEDs and Chevrons. The unit can be used in a variety of ways: as a target for players, as a home base, or as a defense system. It can detect approaching enemies and warn them to disperse.

The Sentry Pod is compatible with all other components of the Radio Frequency System. The unit plugs into a simple 110 volt outlet so it can be moved anywhere in the laser tag arena and as often as the operator wishes.

Describing the development of the new peripherals, Brian Plester of Ascension commented, "Any extra component had to integrate flawlessly with the existing radio frequency components. Secondly, the new peripherals had to add a new dimension to the game and not simply exist just for show. Last but not least, these new components should be unlike anything other companies have previously introduced. With this new Sentry Pod we felt that we addressed all three of these concerns."

IAAPA hosts summer meeting

The International Association of Amusement Parks & Attractions will hold its summer meeting Sept. 17-19 in Southern California where attendees can partake of behind-the-scenes tours of Disneyland, Knott's Berry Farm, Six Flags Magic Mountain, and Universal Studios Hollywood.

A welcome reception opens the meeting; shuttles will be provided to whisk association members to each well-known park. The host hotel is the Sheraton Universal at Universal City.

The summer meeting is an opportunity for networking and experiencing in person the special rides, atmosphere, and attractions at major park destinations. For more information, call IAAPA, (703)836-4800 ext. 751; fax (703)836-4801. Reservations for air travel, car rentals, and hotel accommodations are made through Globetrotter Travel, (888)774-2272 or (301)570-0800; fax (301)570-9514, or e-mail (gttr@aol.com)

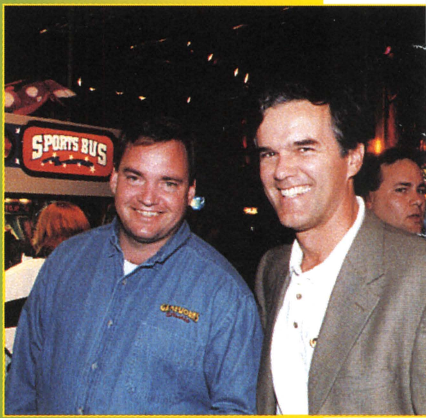
New GameWorks Studio follows movie set theme

A smaller, themed facility geared toward families is the motivating force behind the development of the new GameWorks Studio concept. The first location opened at the Puente Hills Mall in Puente Hills, Calif., in late May (see *Play Meter's* June issue, "Coin-Op News" page 36).

REDEMPTION

The Redemption Area at GameWorks Studio has a carnival theme.

The Studio, inspired by Steven Spielberg and Sound Stage 35 on the Universal Studios back lot, is 20 miles northeast of Los Angeles. It is a combination of Hollywood and pop culture with an imaginative series of themed environments in which video games, motion simulators, redemption equipment, and other attractions are displayed in a movie set atmosphere.



Chris Henry (l), vice president of operations for GameWorks Studio, with Michael Montgomery, president and CEO of Sega GameWorks.

Themed environments or neighborhoods include The Hot Zone, The Living Room, Half Court, The Surf Shack, The Garage, The Chill Zone, and The Redemption Area. The Studio concept complements existing GameWorks entertainment destinations. Look for more Studio locations to open this year.

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- **120 piece** Plush Mix with **35** assorted **Licensed** pieces!

or

- **180 piece** Plush Mix with **52** assorted **Licensed** pieces!
- **6” to 9”** Size Range
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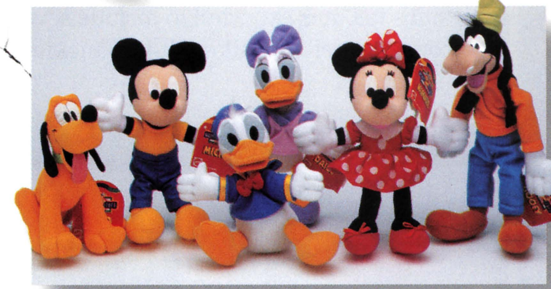

6” to 9”

$1.40 average

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Play-By-Play launches direct mail division

Knickie-n-Knockie

Knickie-n-Knockie will be among the first items in the new Play-By-Play catalog.

Play-By-Play Toys & Novelties has launched a new direct mail division to enhance its existing retail and amusement business. The division will address a growing market in the United States that last year exceeded $1 billion, according to Play-By-Play.

The new initiative will provide the company with an additional channel of distribution for its broad line of products currently sold in mass markets by retailers such as Toys R Us and Wal-Mart, and the amusement market at such facilities as Sea World, Six Flags, Premier Parks, and Dave & Buster's.

The direct mail catalog will include both Play-By-Play's quality stuffed toys and novelty items that are based on licenses for popular entertainment characters, professional sports team logos, and corporate trademarks. The catalog will also feature the company's non-licensed novelty items, electronic toys, and non-licensed stuffed toys.

William F. Rooney will head the new division as vice president of catalog sales. Rooney, who recently joined Play-By-Play, was formerly senior vice president of direct marketing at Regal Greetings and Gifts. He has 20 years of experience in the direct mail business.

Play-By-Play expects to mail its first catalog to U.S. consumers this fall. It is expected to include several new interactive products such as Talkin' Tots, Knickie-n-Knockie, and Penny & Patches.

"This new division is a natural fit with our existing business lines," said company chairman and CEO Arturo Torres. He added, "We are confident that with the combination of Bill's catalog expertise and our proven track record for designing and manufacturing superior and innovative product lines, that this new division will be a strong contributor as we move toward our goal of becoming the preeminent supplier of plush products and novelties to the worldwide retail, amusement, and now the consumer markets."

Mark Gawlik, president and chief operating officer concurred, "Strategically and economically, the direct mail distribution channel makes a lot of sense for us. Most of the products we will offer already exist within our multiple distribution channels."

For more details on the new division, contact Play-By-Play, (800)426-2211 or (210)829-4666; fax (210)824-6565.

50th ANNIVERSARY
AMOA 50 NASHVILLE
CELEBRATION

AMOA celebrates the big 50!

In addition to the latest innovations in coin-op entertainment and related support services and supplies, the big news at the upcoming AMOA Expo '98 slated for Sept. 17-19 in Nashville, Tenn., is the 50th anniversary of the association.

AMOA Expo '98 planning chairman Jim Stansfield of Stansfield Vending in LaCrosse, Wis., is looking forward to a good turnout for this special Expo. The host facility is the Opryland Hotel. Stansfield said, "Based on AMOA's past history in Nashville, we should have a good draw at this year's Expo. With some heavy hitters in the industry on hand, Expo '98 will prove to be an excellent show both educationally and commercially."

Expo '98 will again feature Developers' Row, led by public PC products from the National Amusement Network Inc. This special section of the show floor provides an opportunity to see the future of high-tech products.

Over 6,000 industry professionals are expected to attend the show. A full slate of educational seminars are planned to cover such topics as the Internet, Buying or Leasing Equipment, Tournaments and Leagues, and Business Succession Planning.

Products on display will include the categories of interactive games, pinball, video games, CD jukeboxes, electronic darts, pool tables, sports games, soft modular play equipment, bulk vending, cranes, computer technologies, redemption equipment, phone card vending machines, kiddie rides, prize merchandise, coin counters and validators, monitors and power supplies, and more.

For exhibit information, contact Janice Ilg, (312)245-1021 or (800)937-2662; fax (312)644-0575; e-mail (amuseus@aol.com). For attendee information, fax to Kim Rundle, (312)527-6658.

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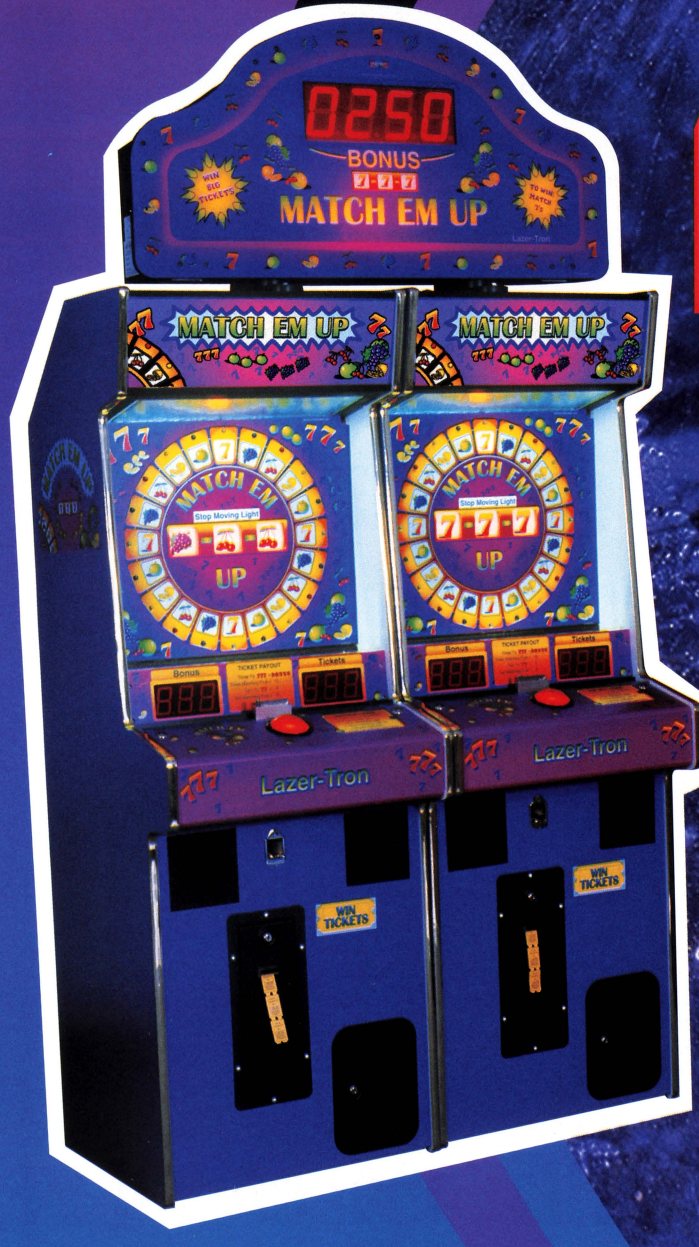
0258
BONUS
7-7-7
MATCH EM UP
WIN BIG TICKETS
TO WIN MATCH 7's
MATCH EM UP
MATCH EM UP
Stop Moving Light
UP
Bonus
TICKET PAYOUT
Tickets
Lazer-Tron
Lazer-Tron
WIN TICKETS
WIN TICKETS

Match Em UP™

Match Em Up is the hot new skill stop that challenges players' reflexes to stop the rotating lights on matching symbols. Each time players stop the light, one of the three spinning reels stops on the same symbol. If players are able to stop on three 7's, they win the bonus tickets. Even if they don't get a 7 on the first stop, players still have a chance to win big tickets by matching up symbols on the last two stops.

Gregg Borman -
Camelot Park Livermore, CA

"Players of all ages love it, women were lined up to play. Customers want a bank of them to sit and play at. Customers have been arguing over who was next to play."

Match Em Up Features:

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Dave & Buster's off to a good start

Dave & Buster's, the restaurant and entertainment complex that started in Dallas and enlarged to include 13 locations in the United States plus a series of sites in the United Kingdom, has posted record financial results for the first quarter.

"We've headed into the most aggressive expansion in our 15-year history, so we're certainly pleased with such an excellent start for fiscal 1998," said Dave Corriveau, co-founder of Dave & Buster's Inc. Co-founder Buster Corley said, "We've gotten the year off to a great beginning with the record-breaking opening of our 13th location, in Utica, Mich." (See *Play Meter's* June issue, page 35 for details.)

Total revenues for the quarter ended May 3, 1998 increased 36 percent to $38.9 million compared to $28.6 million for the quarter ended May 4, 1997. The increase was attributable to revenues from new complexes and a nine percent increase in comparable complex revenues. Also up: net income and income before provision for income taxes.

Dave & Buster's U.S. locations include Dallas, Texas (two); Houston, Texas; Atlanta, Ga.; Philadelphia, Pa.; Chicago, Ill. (two); Hollywood, Fla.; North Bethesda, Md.; Ontario, Calif.; Cincinnati, Ohio; Denver, Colo.; and Utica, Mich., which opened May 7. Under a U.K. licensing agreement with Bass Plc of London, the company opened its first international site in Birmingham, England, in May 1997 with a second location due to open in Bristol, England, this summer.

Music-Vend hosts spring open house

Operators from the Seattle, Wash., area attended the recent Music-Vend Distributing Co. spring open house to see the latest industry games and discuss product offerings with factory representatives.

The Music-Vend showroom was decorated in blue, green, and white in honor of the Seattle Mariners. A group of 40 attendees was taken to a Mariners game the same evening. In addition, door prizes were awarded during the afternoon.

Above: Chris Peppard of Medalist Marketing plays Midway's *NFL Blitz.*at the Music-Vend open house.

Right: Mike Rudowicz of Konami watches as open house attendees sample *Racing Jam.*

BullShooter XIII draws international crowd

Above: Fresh-faced smiles from a hardworking Arachnid team, (l-r): Brad Boe, Jeanne Penney, and Sam Zammuto.

Left: Arachnid's Bob Mills (c) at the Hawaiian-themed booth with operator/players Tim Kidd of Darts Plus in W. Springfield, Md., and Shannee Sheloga of Lansdale Amusements in Hatfield, Pa.

Arachnid's $250,000 BullShooter Tour came to a close over Memorial Day weekend as 6,478 entrants competed for $100,000 in prize money at BullShooter XIII.

Players literally came from all over the world to the Hyatt Regency O'Hare in Chicago, Ill., to compete in the long-running electronic dart championship. A television crew from Germany recorded the finals, a testimonial to the international flavor of the event.

Stated Sam Zammuto, vice president of marketing for Arachnid, "BullShooter is the only true world champion soft-tip tournament due to the level of international player participation."

Sixteen categories of competition were included in the finals, from Men's and Women's Top Gun Challenge to Pro Cricket Doubles and Pro Mixed Cricket. Look for more photos and a full accounting of player standings in our next issue.

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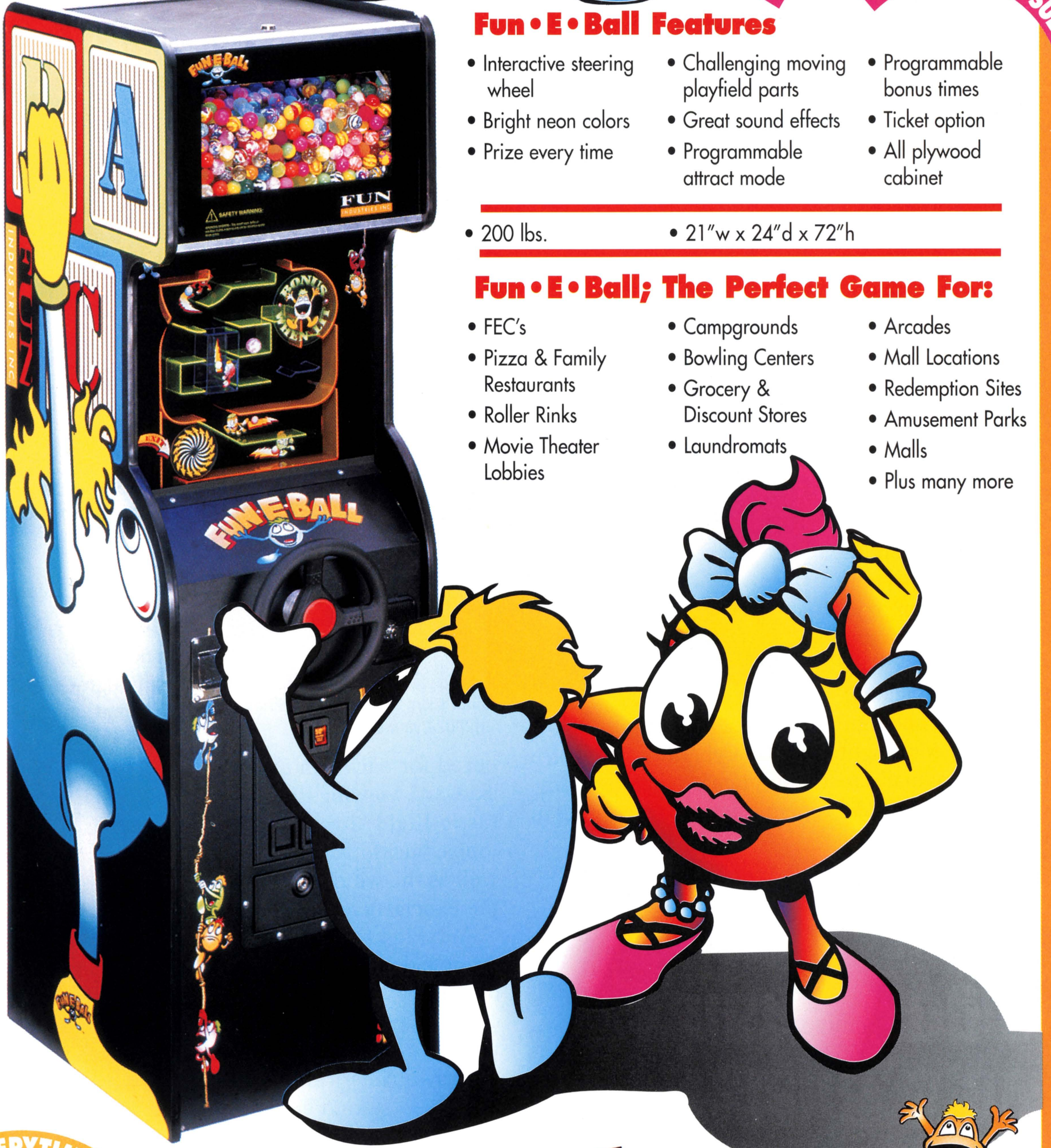

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Fly to the max in Pennsylvania

The MaxFlight Center storefront at the Logan Valley Mall in Altoona, Pa.

The Logan Valley Mall in Altoona, Pa., is now home to the MaxFlight Center, a 2,000-square-foot entertainment venue that offers the thrilling virtual reality technology of the Max Flight Center by MaxFlight Corp. The mall is a Crown American property.

MaxFlight Center features a squadron of four black VR2000 full-motion F-16 jet simulators that allow guests to have total control as they take off, bank, loop-the-loop, roll, vertically climb, dive, and spiral, feeling G forces along the way. Different programs include hair-raising acrobatics, dogfights, sky races, carrier takeoffs, and more.

Simulators are interconnected so friends become foes and all pilots can practice on one of six non-motion networked ground base flight trainers before takeoff. Team play, leagues, and tournaments are all in store.

A bird's eye view of the MaxFlight VR2002 Cyber Coaster.

In addition, the MaxFlight VR2002 Cyber Coaster, which was installed in the mall's main thoroughfare in late spring, has sustained long lines and repeat ridership, according to the company.

The VR2002 Cyber Coaster is a big red mass of motion where riders can program their own rides, choosing track sections of varying thrill degrees. Over a million combinations are possible.

Two riders are safely secured for each run and are soon propelled up to 12 feet skyward, viewing their ride on a 58-inch screen. The fantastic flight through a lost asteroid is virtual, but the loops, backflips, corkscrews, and space twists are real, as well as the wind in their faces. Surround-sound completes the experience.

MaxFlight Corp. president Frank McClintic, a former Army helicopter pilot, inventor, engineer, and self-taught designer envisioned this new concept in simulators back in 1986. He had to wait until technology caught up with his vision.

Crown American of Johnstown, Pa., saw the potential of this one-of-a-kind entertainment center. Crown American president Mark Pasquerilla said, "Entertainment is becoming a vital element in the tenant mix of every shopping mall. We actively pursued the MaxFlight Center for Logan Valley Mall because of its uniqueness."

MaxFlight Corp. marketing director Gary Arvedon is happy with the central Pennsylvania location and said, "We plan on staying a long time." The F-16 fighter over the entrance of the Center was sculpted by Chris Goutos, whose CBG Creations does work for Jim Henson Productions and FAO Schwarz, among others. "We want to do this right," says Arvedon. He can be reached at (732)942-9898, ext. 225.

LHS under new management

Louise's Harness Shop, recently purchased by Susan A. Clift, has changed its name to LHS Inc.

The new office manager for LHS is Elydia J. Archer, who has 15 years experience in the manufacturing business with eight of those dealing in the purchasing and accounting aspects of business.

The company product line continues to be 8-line harnesses, custom cabinets and tails, JAMMA and generic harnesses, interface PCB for conversions, and JAMMA to 8-line conversion kits.

LHS retains its same office address: 100 Spring St., Tuscumbia, AL 35674. A new area code affects the phone and fax: (800)365-1941 or (256)381-6639; fax (256)381-6180.

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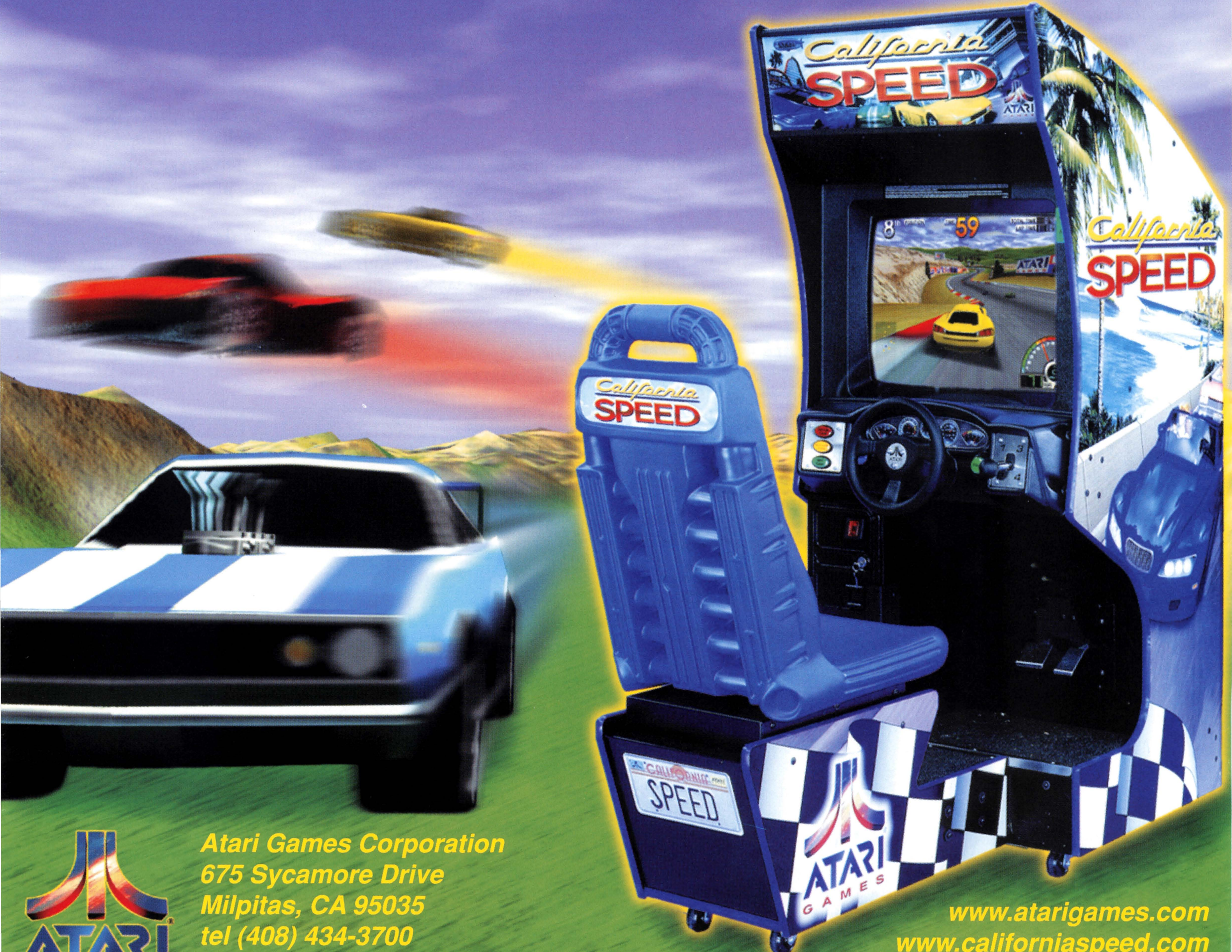
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Midway launches Wavenet test

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Midway Games' Wavenet network links over 50 *San Francisco Rush: the Rock* games at more than 20 locations in California.

Midway Games started a major test this spring of its proprietary Wavenet arcade game network technology at over 20 locations in and around San Francisco and Los Angeles, Calif. Wavenet links coin-op arcade games at multiple locations for competitive play against opponents across town or across the country with no perceptible delay in game play action. The term of the test is April to September.

Ken Fedesna, vice president of Midway, said, "The purpose of the test is to determine how to structure the network to maximize the player appeal of linked play. The Wavenet technology presents a number of new opportunities. From regional and national tournaments to online, custom advertising in coin-op games, there are some exciting new possibilities. The key is to use the technology to optimize the players' experience, which will increase game play."

The test links more than 50 *San Francisco Rush: the Rock* games from Atari. Over the coming months the test will expand to 50 sites with over 100 linked games. Players responded enthusiastically to earlier tests. If successful, arcade owners could download software updates to existing games or add new game features for Wavenet play and participate in regional or national tournaments.

Wavenet project leader Tony Metke said, "Wavenet can link even the fastest sports, fishing, and driving games, allowing players hundreds or even thousands of miles apart to compete in real time."

Mary Fujihara, vice president of marketing for Atari, added, "The Wavenet technology is a perfect fit for *Rush* because it has been a popular multiplayer game. We expect a major increase in popularity now that players can race against opponents all over California."

For a list of locations participating in the Wavenet test, check out the Midway Web site (http://www.midway.com) or the Wavenet Web site (http://www.rushrock.com).

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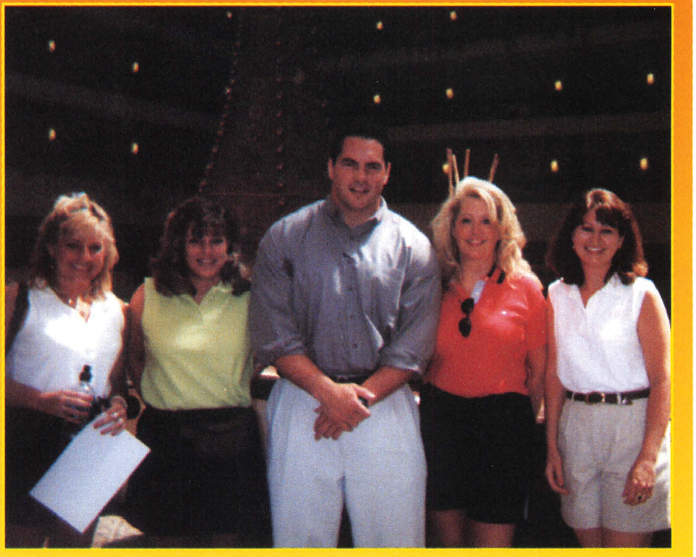
Four girls and a bear



It's no wonder these coin-op ladies are smiling. They're next to handsome NFL athlete Jim Flanigan of the Chicago Bears during the AAMA annual meeting in Itasca, Ill. From left: Rita Rokos of CES, Angela Orlando and Darlene Lamz of AAMA, and Mary Hermanson of Konami.

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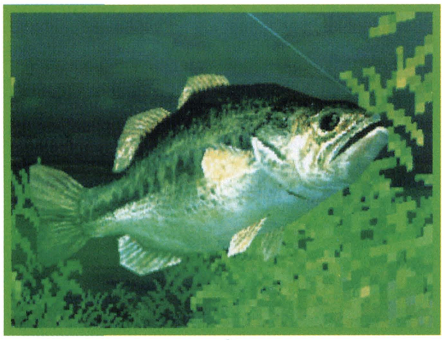

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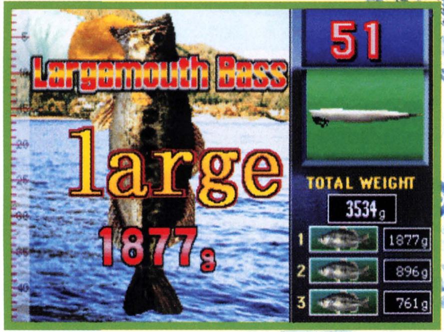
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2 896g
3 761g

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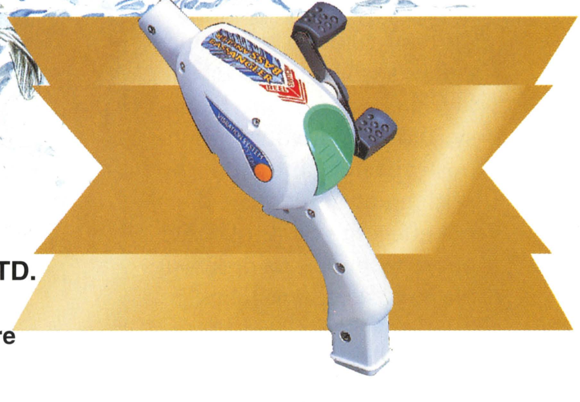

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(847) 215-5100 Fax: (847) 215-5122
Visit Our Web Site: www.konami.com

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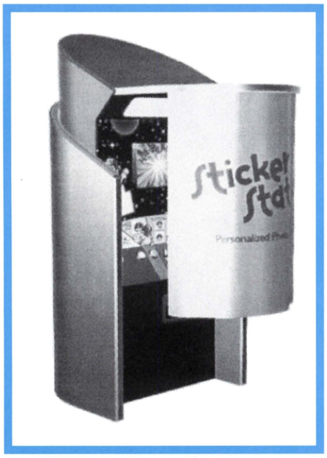
APBI brings Godzilla to you

American Photo Booths Inc. gives moviegoers a chance to get up close and personal with Godzilla at special *Godzilla Sticker Station* machines in Sony theaters this summer. Look for them in Manhattan, upstate New York, Long Island, Connecticut, New Jersey, Baltimore, Atlanta, Chicago, Texas, and Los Angeles.



APBI's *Sticker Station* machines now let you get up close and personal with Godzilla!

Godzilla-themed units offer customers the chance to take on Godzilla at the theaters and other retail locations around the country. They receive 16 peel-off stickers with their photos imposed on colorful background graphics.

APBI has *Sticker Station* machines in retail locations such as Toys R Us. Urban Outfitters, Limited Too!, Old Navy, and Warner Bros. Studio stores, as well as Sea World, Club Disney, and Universal Studios.

In other APBI news, the company and Foto Fantasy have reached a settlement that will conclude the lawsuit that APBI filed against Foto Fantasy in August, 1997. APBI, which holds the rights to U.S. Patent No. 5,623,581 relating to photo sticker machines, sued Foto Fantasy claiming Foto Fantasy's photo sticker machine infringes APBI's patent rights.

To settle the lawsuit, Foto Fantasy has entered into a limited license agreement with APBI relating to the particular machines in question, under which Foto Fantasy will pay a one-time settlement payment plus ongoing royalty payments to APBI. No additional photo sticker machines shall be licensed. The lawsuits against Foto Fantasy did not involve photo postcard machines, and the settlement agreement does not affect the rights of either party to make, use, or sell photo postcard machines.

IAFEC omitted from article

Carole Sjolander, executive director of the International Association of Family Entertainment Centers, contacted us to point out an omission last month. We had an article penned by technical writer Vic Fortenbach titled "Sightsurfing on the information super highway." In it Vic visited several Web sites including industry trade associations. While he covered AAMA, AMOA, IAAPA, even NAMA, somehow he overlooked IAFEC.

Carole told us that Brad Heck and Jeff Moser of the Webcats (Lombard, Ill.) created and maintains the site for the association and invited people to check it out. Carole said she'd appreciate any feedback. She added that there is a special "members only" section for IAFEC members who need a password which changes each month. It is published in its newsletter, Fun Extra. We took her up on the offer to take a look and we liked what we saw. You will too and there's even information about joining IAFEC. Here's the address for the Web site: (www.iafec.org). If you want to e-mail, (iafecnh@aol.com). We apologize to Carole and the fine people who have worked so hard to make IAFEC one of the premier associations for the entertainment industry.

Nightclub & Bar taps Newton

Business consultant Neill Newton, famous for his 18-step Red Striped Zebra program on marketing and customer service, will be a featured speaker at the 24th International Nightclub & Bar and Beverage Retailer Convention and Trade Show Aug. 10-12 in Orlando, Fla.

According to Ed Meek, president of Oxford Publishing Inc. and show producer: "Neill Newton has more than 20 years of successful business development experience and is a perfect fit into our educational seminar schedule. The show is designed to help business owners learn how to make more money, and we are delighted that Neill has agreed to share his program with our attendees. His unique marketing techniques guarantee profits for any business. His ideas are easy to follow, and most importantly, easy to implement."

Newton will speak Monday, Aug. 10 at 1 p.m. For more information on the show, call (800)247-3881.

MCM Electronics offers 41st catalog

MCM Electronics has prepared its 41st catalog of consumer electronics repair parts and accessories that includes over 5,000 new products from test equipment to connectors, and computer products to original OEM TV/VCR repair parts.

MCM stocks 39,000 items from well-known brands such as Hitachi, Weller, RCA, GE, Panasonic, Philips, Magnavox, Pioneer, Sony, Proscan, and more. In addition, the 22-year-old company is now an authorized distributor for the complete line of Denon replacement parts.

MCM prides itself on superior customer service and offers same-day shipping of in-stock orders received by 5 p.m. your time. The company has warehouses near Dayton, Ohio, and Reno, Nev.

For a free copy of the newest catalog, call (800)543-4330, or check the Web site (http://www.mcmelectronics.com).

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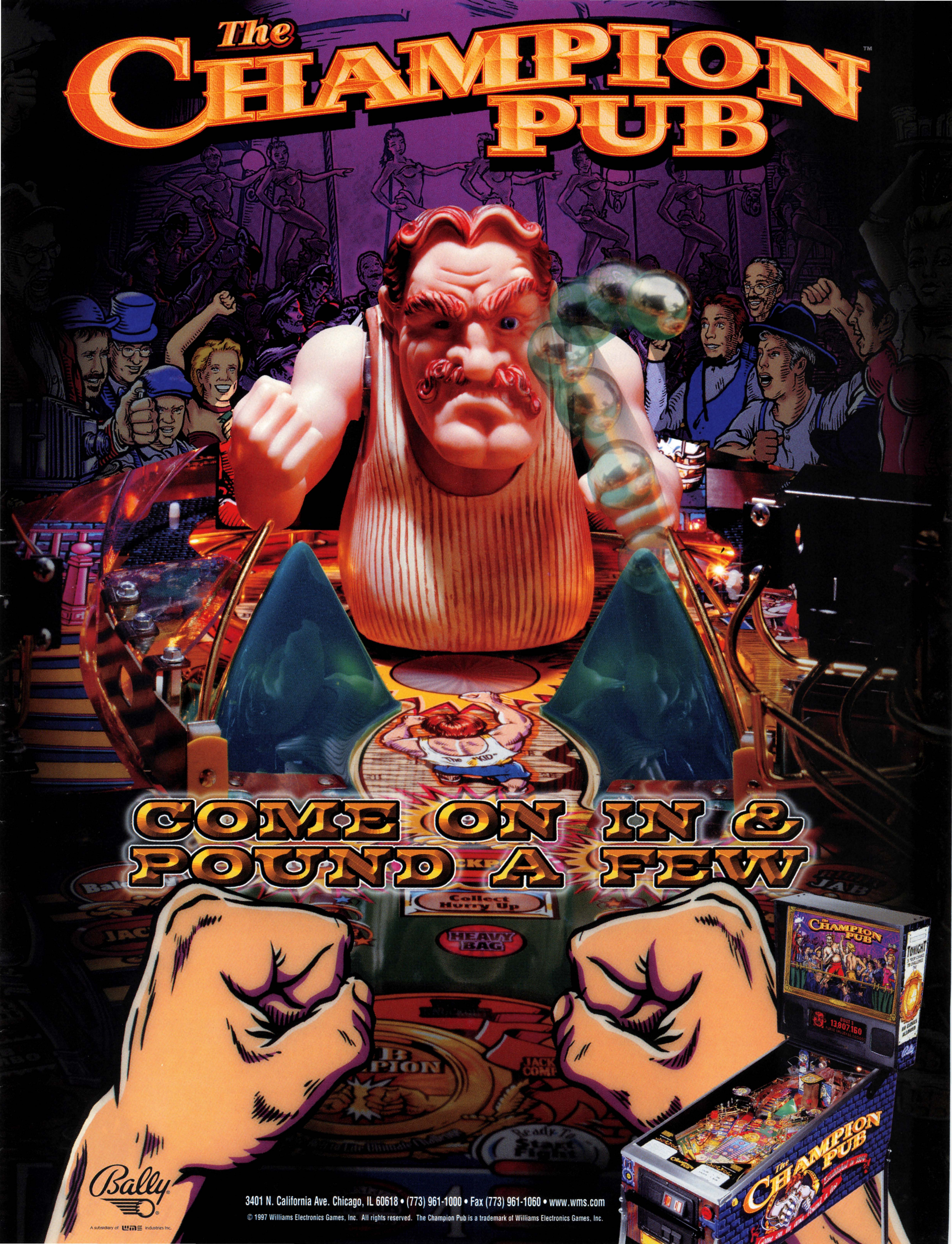
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Konami goes fishin'

Konami of America introduces *Fisherman's Bait*, a new video kit that offers fun for players of all ages and skill levels. The goal is to catch as many bass as possible to extend your fishing time; catch any fish other than bass and you earn less time.

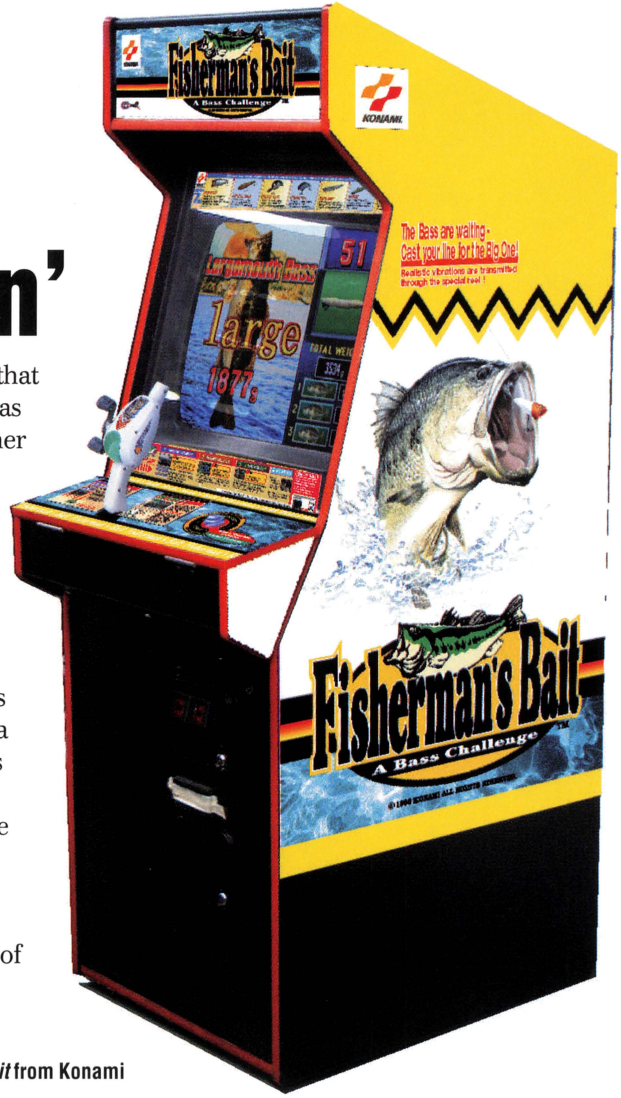
Fisherman's Bait, which ships this month, features a realistic rod and reel control that replicates the tug and vibration associated with hooking a big one!

There are three levels of play: beginner, with lure and casting techniques; training, with three scenic lakes to try; and tournament, where players become the champion at all three lakes.

Players can select the level of play, favorite fishing hole, and lures from a field of seven. Each type of lure moves through the water in a different way to attract fish. The amount the player catches depends on the time of day, temperature, season, location, and the lure.

After players cast the line and hook a fish, they can adjust the line drag with the reel switch. If you catch a real fighter and there is too much tension, the line will break.

The kit comes with PCB, special rod and reel controller, and artwork. For more information, or distributor referral, contact Konami of America, (847)215-5100; fax (847)215-5122; Web site (http://www.konami.com).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Realistic vibrations are transmitted through the special reel!
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large
1877g
51
Fisherman's Bait
A Bass Challenge

***Fisherman's Bait* from Konami**

RSA convention highlights

"The Magic of Roller Fun" was the theme of the recent Roller Skating Association International Convention and Trade Show in Lake Buena Vista, Fla. The show was an opportunity to network, learn more about the skating industry, and view new products.

Nearly 715 attendees and 103 exhibiting companies were at the show. Seminars concentrated on promotions, hockey, liability, USA Roller Skating clubs, small and large market panel discussions, litigation, marketing, rock 'n roll lyrics, and the echo boom. Games and DJ techniques were demonstrated at an in-rink seminar at Skate Reflections in Kissimmee, Fla.

The first Roller Skating University continuing education program welcomed 112 attendees. Two topics were on the agenda: food service management and safety management. Additional sessions are planned for future conventions until a total of 12 modules are completed.

In addition, new association officers were elected during the show: Don Perkins as president for a two year term and Deb Torries as vice president.

Perkins owns Roll On America in Leominster, Mass., and has been a member of RSA for 23 years. He was previously vice president of the association. His goals include focusing on education, marketing the industry, finding new member benefits, and making the RSA an industry leader. Torries owns Skate Zone in New Iberia, La., and has served on the RSA board for five years.

Joining the board of directors are: Ed Caldwell (Dimond Skateland in Anchorage, Alaska); Ted Rendfrey (Echelon Skating Center in Voorhees, N.J., Cherry Hill Skating Center in Cherry Hill, N.J., Holiday Skating Center in Delanco, N.J., and Palace Roller Skating Center in Philadelphia, Pa.); and Bill Carlson (Skate Depot in Cerritos, Calif., Skate Express in Cerritos, Calif., Skate Junction in West Covina, Calif., and Skate N' Fun Zone in San Jacinto, Calif.).

Condolences

We were saddened to learn of the death of Harvey Fischer. Harvey worked for Stan Harris & Co. in Philadelphia, Pa., for nearly 40 years before purchasing the company from his former boss. However, the company struggled and was forced to shut its doors after several years. We join Harvey's family and friends in saying farewell.

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Sega's new tourney features

Sega has given operators a great way to promote their *Harley-Davidson: L.A. Riders* games. It's a tournament feature which allows operators to run unattended tournaments without the need for a modem hook-up. They can run tournaments on any number of games in one location with this feature to promote tournament play and increase revenue.

The feature, according to the company, has been receiving positive reactions from operators. The Tournament Mode can be accessed through the test mode's game assignment mode. The operator sets the date the tournament is to begin and when it will end.

The Attract Mode will display the message "Tournament Now Being Held." The player is automatically entered into the tournament as long as he plays during the tournament time frame set by the operator. Once the player qualifies with a high score, he must enter his three initials and a two-digit code. The score will be entered under the ranking for that particular motorcycle; therefore, there will be five potential tournament winners.

The player ranking for each motorcycle and highest overall score will be cycled through the Attract Mode. Daily rankings will list all top scores for each day; weekly rankings will list all top scores at the end of each week; and monthly rankings will list all top scores at the end of each month for the duration of the tournament.

If you need more information on running tournaments on your *Harley-Davidson* games, contact Sega, (650)802-3100 or call your local distributor.

OPERATOR BEWARE:

The provision of the U.S. copyright law (17 U.S.C.- 19(E)) which permitted the public performance of parallel and gray market video games expired in 1995. As a result, operating and performing **"Zero Point"** parallel or gray market boards for profit is a violation of GameVision's rights under Federal law, and GameVision will be forced to pursue all available legal remedies against such operators.

In addition to the legal problem, keep in mind that parallel boards carry no factory warranty, and no upgrading programs will be available in the future.

Please check and verify that AAMA enforcement and GameVision's warranty stickers appear on the P.C. game boards before you make a decision to purchase **"Zero Point"** from distributors. The parallel boards have no control panel overlay, and come with a different marquee made of a plastic material with the UNICO manufacturer's name on it, instead of GameVision's name that is written on the legal board's marquee.

GameVision will continue to support American distribution and market only through the proper channels both Unico and GameVision have set forth for U.S. distribution.

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If you have any questions or need the name of your authorized distributor, please contact Dave or Dean at:

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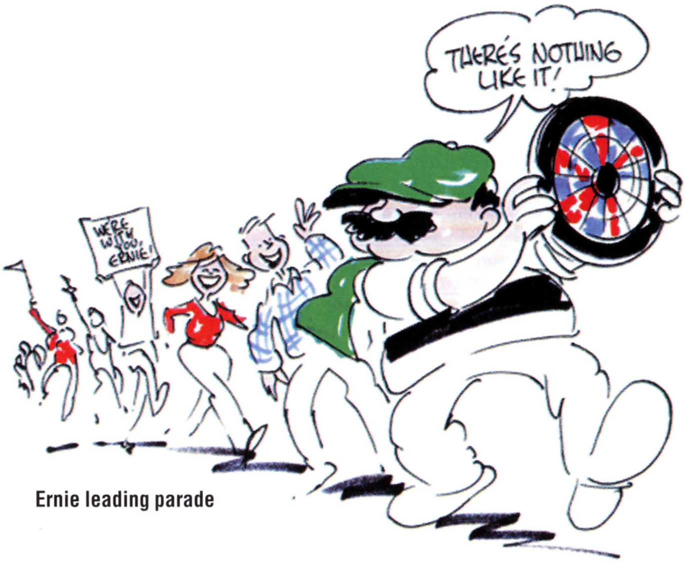
Valley Gold becomes Ernie's Tourney


THERE'S NOTHING LIKE IT!
WE'RE WITH YOU, ERNIE!

Ernie leading parade

Earlier this year Valley Recreation Products restructured its dart tournament around the central theme of players having fun and changed the format of its Valley Gold tournament. By all indications it's a huge success.

The company's over-the-top cartoon spokesman Ernie now headlines the tournament, renamed Ernie's Tourney, featuring the *Cougar* dart machine's play-the-computer feature, Ernie. Ernie's Tourney is billed as "fully saturated fun." Over 50 percent of participating operators are first-timers, and all seem pleased with the players' excitement level.

According to Gregg Elliott, Ernie's Tourney director, "We wanted this tournament to be open to everyone—men, women, skilled and not so skilled, with the emphasis on everyone having a good time. And to make it as much fun as possible, we built in all kinds of off-the-wall events, contests, and prizes. Everyone can be a part of the tournament and play for prizes without feeling intimidated."

After a series of local operator qualifiers the tournament reaches its national championship level at the Riviera Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas July 9-11. Featured events include Men's & Women's Team USA, Men's Level A, B, and C Singles; Women's Level A and B Singles; Rapid Fire Competition; Draw Your Partner Doubles; and assorted minitournaments.

Playful events include Best Throwing Form, Loser's Anonymous Club, Bad Hair Day, and the Ernie Look-Alike Contest with prizes such as jackets, shirts, and dart sets.

The Ernie Look-Alike Contest has caused the biggest response from both men and women. An Ernie Get-Up Kit is available free to contestants as part of the operator's tournament promotional package but a lot of people do their own. Contest finalists will be notified and asked to appear in full Ernie attire at the championship where a winner will be announced.

In addition to the fun, there's plenty of cash and prizes to be won, over $25,000 including $2,500-value European trip packages for first and second place finishers in both men's and women's brackets. Cash prizes range from $75 to $700.

One operator participant said, "Tournaments like Ernie's Tourney and ongoing leagues are the key to an operator being profitable and successful."

Bob Corrigan, sales/service manager for the Valley electronics division, said, "Dart leagues increase weekly income significantly, and the heightened interest nurtured by leagues carries over so there's more in the cash box during the off-season too."

For more information about setting up dart leagues and promotions, contact Corrigan, (800)331-5420; for more on Ernie's Tourney, contact Elliott, (800)544-1346.

Ryan Amusements celebrates 40 years

Ryan Family Amusements of Bourne, Mass., is celebrating its 40th year in the amusement business. It all started with an eight-lane bowling center under the U.S. Post Office in Needham, Mass., in May 1958.

Owner James Ryan of Osterville opened other bowling centers over the years in Quincy, Falmouth, Avon, Raynham, Buzzards Bay, South Yarmouth, Malden, Hyannis, Boston, and Middletown, R.I.

Ryan currently owns and operates bowling centers in South Yarmouth, Buzzards Bay, Raynham, and Boston (under historic Fenway Park), and game rooms in the Cape Cod Mall, Hyannis, Newport, R.I., and Dreamland Fun Center on Martha's Vineyard.

In its history, Ryan locations rented 1.5 million pairs of bowling shoes to customers. Congratulations to Ryan on four decades of providing family fun, not to mention what they did for the bowling shoes industry.

OPUS appoints Deith

Opus Entertainment has named Deith Distributing as its exclusive agent in Canada. Deith, in turn, will be appointing distributors in Canada to represent Opus' new line of PC arcade games, the first of which is *Actua Soccer Arcade.*

The game, developed by Gremlin Interactive, utilizes motion capture technology for a heightened level of realism. It also features the Canadian soccer team.

For more information, contact Deith Distributing, (516)621-1234; fax (516)621-1238; e-mail (deith@deithdist.com); Web site (http://www.deithdist.com).

☛ **Atlas Distributing** of Illinois recently hosted a joint open house and grand opening at its new Chicago-area headquarters, 2001 Estes Ave., Elk Grove Village, Ill. 60007. Make note of the new phone (847)952-7500 and fax (847)981-9829.

☛ **Laser Storm Inc**., the Denver, Colo.-based developer and manufacturer of themed laser tag systems filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection May 22.

☛ **Photo Vend International** has a new address. In order to offer optimum service to its clients, Photo Vend has consolidated its worldwide operations under one roof: Westgate Business Center, 5010 N. Hiatus Road, Sunrise, FL; (954)742-4220 or for technical support, (954)742-8427; fax (954)742-4227; Web site (http://www.photovend. com).

☛ **Midway Games** informs that its board of directors has authorized the repurchase of up to one million shares of its common stock. Purchases may be made in the open market from time to time over the next year. The timing of the purchases and the actual number of shares to be purchased will depend on market conditions. Midway, which completed its initial public offering in 1996, became an independent company following its spinoff from WMS Industries April 6, 1998.

☛ **Tommy Gate Co.** has acquired a second paint booth that will increase production efficiency to meet the growing demand for its Tommy Lift hydraulic lift gates. The company also advises that it achieved record sales this spring.

☛ **The American Darters Association** will host the 7th Annual ADA National Championship at the Ramada Hotel at the Chicago O'Hare Airport July 30-Aug 2. Over 700 competitors are expected to compete for more than $60,000 in cash and prizes to be awarded in team, doubles, singles, and mixed triples categories. For more details, call (888)327-8752 or visit the ADA Web site (http://www.adadarters.com).

☛ **Eastman Kodak Co.** has purchased the assets of Rave Reviews Innovative Concessions and Rave Reviews of Canada, designers and installers of photographic systems for thrill rides and other image-related businesses in theme parks. Rave Reviews will be dissolved and Kodak will integrate the companies' assets into its themed entertainment business operated by the company's Entertainment Imaging division.

Have You HEARD?

☛ **Quantum 3D** began shipping its long-awaited Obsidian2 S/X Series consumer line of real-time 3D graphics accelerators in June. Obsidian2 S/X is designed to deliver compelling high-speed 3D graphics and features four different models, the largest family of Voodoo2-based products. Signing Babbage's Etc. as its first national retail outlet marks the first time Quantum 3D Obsidian2 products have been made available in the retail channel to consumers. ▲

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Start by participating in the Thursday golf outing and/or timely seminars, followed by a cocktail reception, dinner and exhibits. Friday activities include a buffet breakfast, annual membership meeting (open to all) and exhibits from 10AM-2PM. Prizes will be awarded throughout the two days but, you must be present to win.

*Remember, this is a **FULL** equipment show.*

REMEMBER - Non-Ohio Operators who are members of either their state association or AMOA may register at OCMA Member rates.

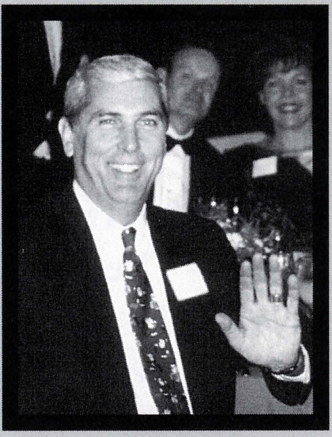
IN MEMORY

Patrick Harper

"And before you know me gone, eternity and I are one."
– Grover Cleveland

Patrick Harper did a lot in his short 52 years. More than some men accomplish in 75, his friends said. He was on the board of directors of several organizations including the Catholic Youth Organization and he revived the alumni association of his alma mater, to name just two of his many accomplishments. But 52 years was all he had. He found out just about 18 months ago that he had cancer and fought hard against the unmerciful disease. But on June 3, Pat lost the battle, leaving behind a grieving family, devastated friends, and an industry that will not be the same without him.

Pat was born and raised in the Pittsburgh, Pa., area, the baby of five children. He left his hometown to attend Marian College in Indianapolis, Ind. As it turned out, he got a lot more than an education in Indiana! He met his future wife Charlene Eppers and found a promising and ultimately successful career in the coin machine industry.



Charlene's mother, it turned out, was best friends with Jane Flynn, whose husband Joe owned J&J Distributors. Pat met Charlene's family and in the process became acquainted with the Flynns, which also included their son Kelly. After Pat graduated with a degree in math, finished his military commitments, and married Charlene, he was trying to decide what he wanted to do with his life. He had a pretty good idea he wanted to get into some sort of sales position.

Joe Flynn was impressed with Pat and asked him if he wanted to work at J&J. The rest, so they say, is history. Pat walked through the door in August 1968 and never left. Pat, Kelly, and a select few of their associates eventually purchased the company from Joe in 1983, and as Kelly described, "We built a business together." Just after Pat got sick, they sold J&J to Shaffer Distributing, a move that Kelly and Pat were both ecstatic about. Ironically, Joe Flynn had begun his industry trek at Shaffer in 1938 working for Steve Shaffer's grandfather. In 1959 he and partner John Stocksdale purchased the Shaffer Indianapolis office and changed the name to J&J. Talk about coming full circle.

Kelly and Pat became close friends both in and away from the office. Kelly, who had two sisters, called Pat "the brother I always wanted." Kelly had nothing but praise for him as a businessman, husband, and father.

"I was associated with Pat for almost 30 years and it was a privilege knowing him. He was a loyal husband, devoted father, and good friend. What impressed me was that there wasn't a chink in his armor. He was truly a great man," Kelly said.

Kelly shared one of his favorite stories about Pat: "Pat had just joined the company when he and Joe attended the 1968 MOA show. After a tiring drive to the Drake Hotel, they were told there was only one room. As if that wasn't bad enough, the room only had one bed. And it got worse—there were no rollaways either. Pat volunteered to sleep on the floor, but Joe wouldn't hear of it. They both got into their pajamas and were ready to turn in. Pat looked over and saw Joe kneeling beside the bed saying his prayers. Pat did likewise and they hopped into bed. What a memory of your first AMOA show—saying your prayers and then sleeping with your boss!"

Pat's circle of coin machine friends included a special golf group affectionately dubbed "The Posse." It included Joe Franz of H.A. Franz Co.; John Schultz of Weymouth Distributing; Tim Lacey, recently retired from Crystal Catering; and Lenny Olofson of Betson West. Whenever a convention was coming, they'd make plans to get together to play golf. Their final game together was just a few weeks before Pat died. The Posse met in Indianapolis, and although Pat was pretty sick by this time, they hit the links. Kelly said, "Pat was the best golfer among the group, but that last time he could not have cared less about the score. But I'll never forget how thrilled he was just to be playing golf with his buddies."

A visit to Pat's office was all it took to figure out what his passions were. There were golf mementos, photos of his wife, and even more pictures of his kids, Brock and Karrie, both college students. Pat also had a knack for giving his friends nicknames. For example, Posse member John Schultz was Shultzie, and Tim Lacey was Timbucks, referring to the $10 he always seemed to lose when playing golf!

Pat's enthusiasm for his family knew no bounds. Kelly laughed when he related a story Pat shared with him a few years ago. Karrie was in the eighth grade and wanted to go to a certain basketball game. Pat volunteered to take her and looked forward to it. They bought hot dogs, popcorn, and drinks, and settled into their seats. Karrie saw some friends and away she went. With about a minute left in the game, Karrie returned to her dad. Pat told Kelly that it was then that he realized his little girl was growing up!

The industry will miss Pat, and we join with the rest of his friends and Charlene, Karrie, Brock, brothers Bill, Jim, and John Harper, and sister Ann Liberati in saying a final farewell to a truly wonderful man. ▲

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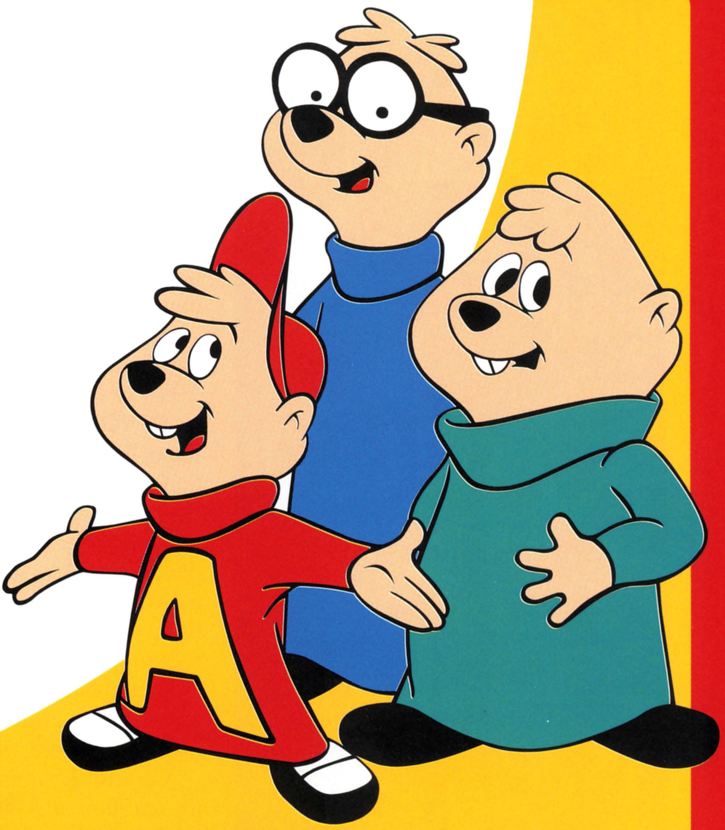

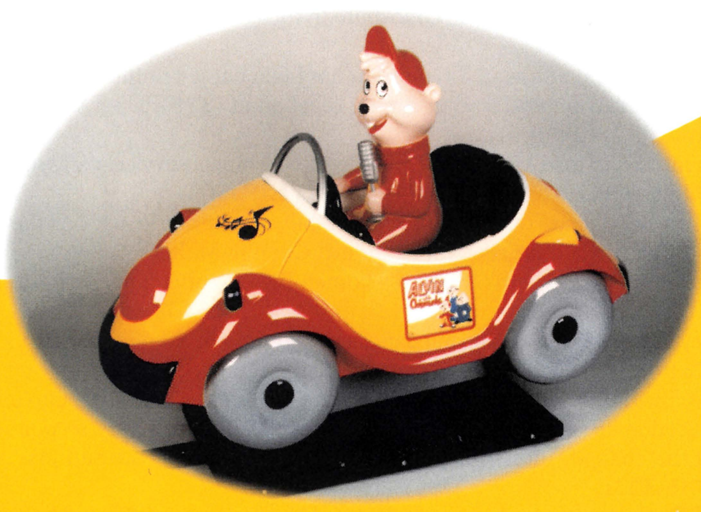

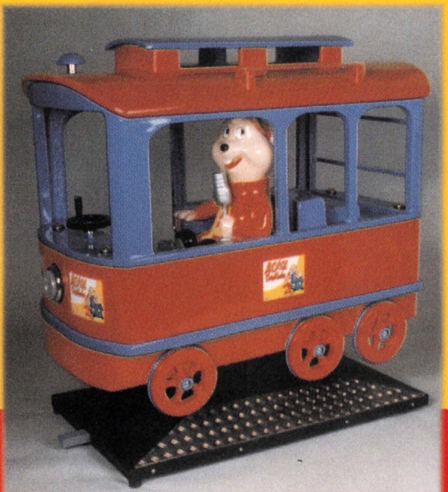

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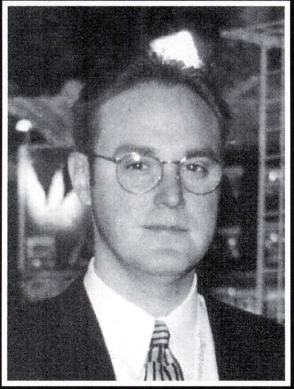
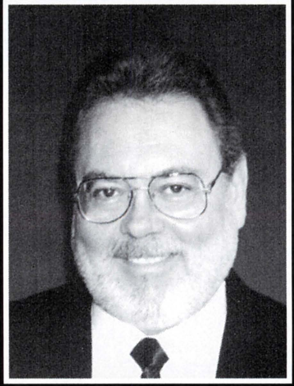
Who's NEWS



ROBERT VITTITOE

DEBBIE GONZALEZ



JOHN NUSSER

CINDY STRACHAN

ROBERT VITTITOE has joined the sales staff of prize merchandise supplier U.S. Toy Co. He was formerly redemption sales manager with Rhode Island Novelty. Vittitoe previously worked in distribution as well as with Gekay Sales, Oriental Trading, and Northeast Imports. He can be reached at (816)761-5900; fax (816)761-9295.

DEBBIE GONZALEZ has returned to redemption game manufacturer Planet Earth Entertainment where she is now vice president of sales for both Planet Earth and Five Star Redemption. Gonzalez began her coin-op career at Planet Earth in 1994. Most recently she was director of sales and marketing for HanaHo Games. She can be reached at (818)773-6056; fax (818)773-6064.

J-S Sales Co. Inc. has appointed **JOHN NUSSER** as vice president. Nusser has been with J-S for 13 years and has served both as operations manager and general manager. Before joining J-S, Nusser spent 10 years as the managing director of an overseas subsidiary of Bally Mfg. Nusser and the entire staff of J-S stand ready to serve their customers and lead the company into the future. Nusser can be reached at (800)431-2944 or (914)668-8051; fax (914)668-8735.

CINDY STRACHAN has been named vice president and show manager for Fun Expo, the fall trade show devoted to the operation and development of family and location-based entertainment centers. Strachan, who succeeds Bailey Beeken, has been with Reed Exhibition Companies for 14 years. Reed purchased Fun Expo in September 1997.

During her tenure with Reed, Strachan was responsible for exhibit sales, conference development, event management, and industry relations programs. Reed senior vice president Chris Miller said, "Cindy's years of experience in the trade show industry will bring value and vision to Fun Expo, and will contribute to the continued growth, vitality, and overall success of that event."

In addition to Strachan's appointment, Tina Jordan has been named public relations manager for Fun Expo. Strachan and Jordan can be reached at (888)FUNEXPO or (203)840-5606; fax (203)840-9606.

Cointrol Equipment of San Jose, Calif., has expanded its technical service staff with the addition of **ANDREW TOWNSEND** and **MASAO HIRATA.**

Townsend brings over 10 years of experience in the bill changer industry. For the past eight years he was service manager for Standard Change Makers in Santa Fe Springs, Calif. Prior to that he was with Standard's home office in Indianapolis as production engineer.

Hirata brings over 35 years of engineering experience in the bill changer industry. He comes to Cointrol from Micro Changers, formerly Micro-Magnetic Industries.

Both men fit in well with the company's desire to expand its service operation into a high level of sophistication and to establish a customer network which is very responsive to the needs of the changer industry. Townsend and Hirata are in the San Jose, Calif., office, (800)338-7031.

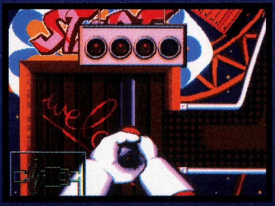
KEVIN VERNER has been named vice president and chief operating officer of both WMS Industries and WMS Gaming Inc. The WMS chief operating officer post was previously held by Louis Nicastro, who remains chairman, president, and CEO of the company.

Verner joined WMS Gaming in 1997 as executive vice president and general manager. He was instrumental in focusing the company's resources on video gaming as well as relaunching its reel-spinning casino games. Verner commented that he looked forward to the challenge of building a significant market share for the company, and added that optimism runs high for the new Pinball 2000 series of games slated for fall release. He can be reached at (773)961-1111; fax (773)961-1099.

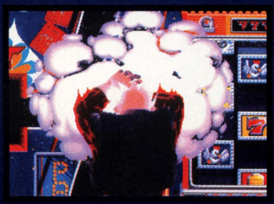
Play Meter's special projects editor **STEVE WHITE** has left his post at the magazine and moved to the West Coast. White joined *Play Meter* in the fall of 1994 as associate editor. The "Through the Looking Glass" column that he contributed to will continue as a regular feature dedicated to tracking new developments in technology affecting the coin-op industry. We wish him well in new endeavors. ▲

The Irritating Maze™

Get A Grip on SNK's Electrifying Game!



The Irritating Maze attracts players of all ages with game play that's easy to understand.



Maneuver the trackball through the maze. Be careful not to touch the walls or get squeezed in!

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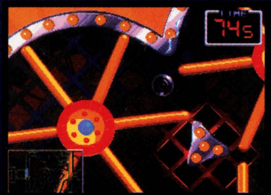

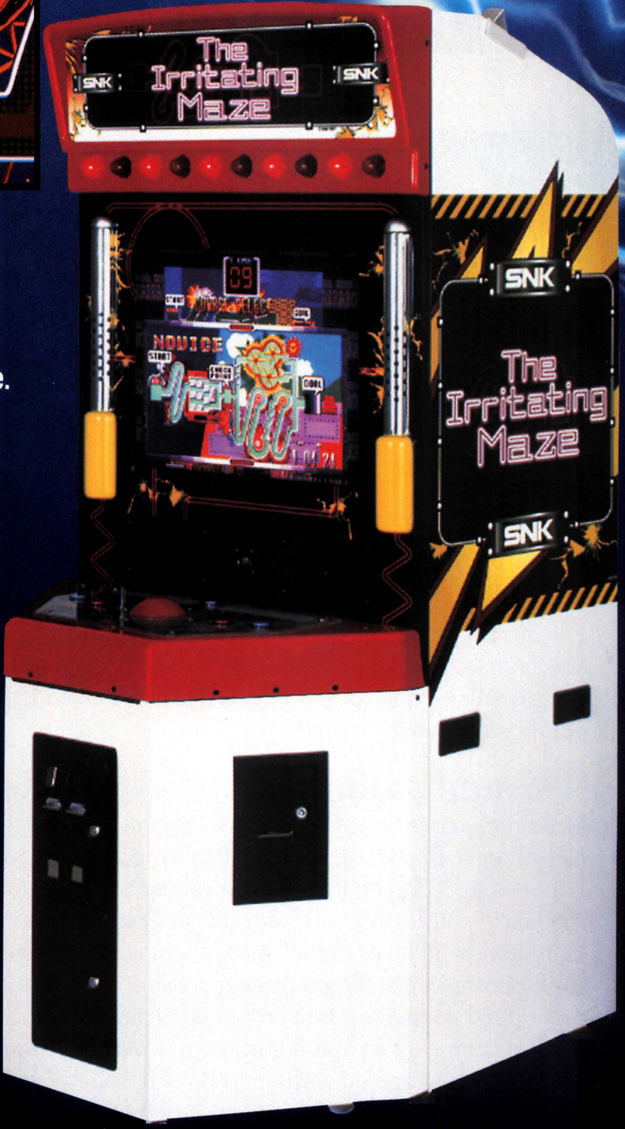
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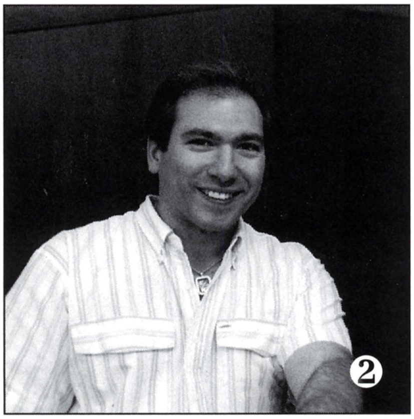
BEYOND THE PLAYFIELD

①

❶ WORLD TRAVELERS and fellow Texans Bill Rickett of Dynamo Ltd. and Dave Patterson of SunBelt Amusement and Vending Sales Co. recently journeyed via The Orient Express to major capitals in Europe. Here Bill (l) and his wife Marsha join Dave and Jan Harrell for a quick photo in beautiful St. Mark's Square in Venice, Italy.


②

❷ AMA DISTRIBUTORS of Metairie, La., is taking the video game rating system seriously. In its monthly newsletter to customers, general manager Jim Pietrangelo wrote in his "My Turn" column: "Is everyone aware that you should be putting video game rating stickers on all of your games? Video game violence is a critical issue for our industry. Video game violence, and in some cases sexual content, is seen by some as getting out of hand. If we do not police and regulate ourselves, then the federal government has promised that they will do it for us. No one wants to see that happen. For the answers to all your questions about this important issue, contact AMOA or visit their Web site (http://www.amoa.com). They also provide a listing of all games with ratings." Amen!

❸ RICH BABICH and his Colorado Game and Vending Exchange in Denver have become celebrities in circles other than coin-op. One of Rich's regular customers happens to be famed ice skating pro and Olympic gold medalist Scott Hamilton who trains in Colorado Springs. Hamilton, who loves pinball games and is a spokesperson for Discover cards, filmed three television ads in which he mentioned companies he likes doing business with, including FAO Schwarz and, you guessed it, Colorado Game and Vending Exchange. According to Babich, so far Discover has run from 300 to 400 ads.

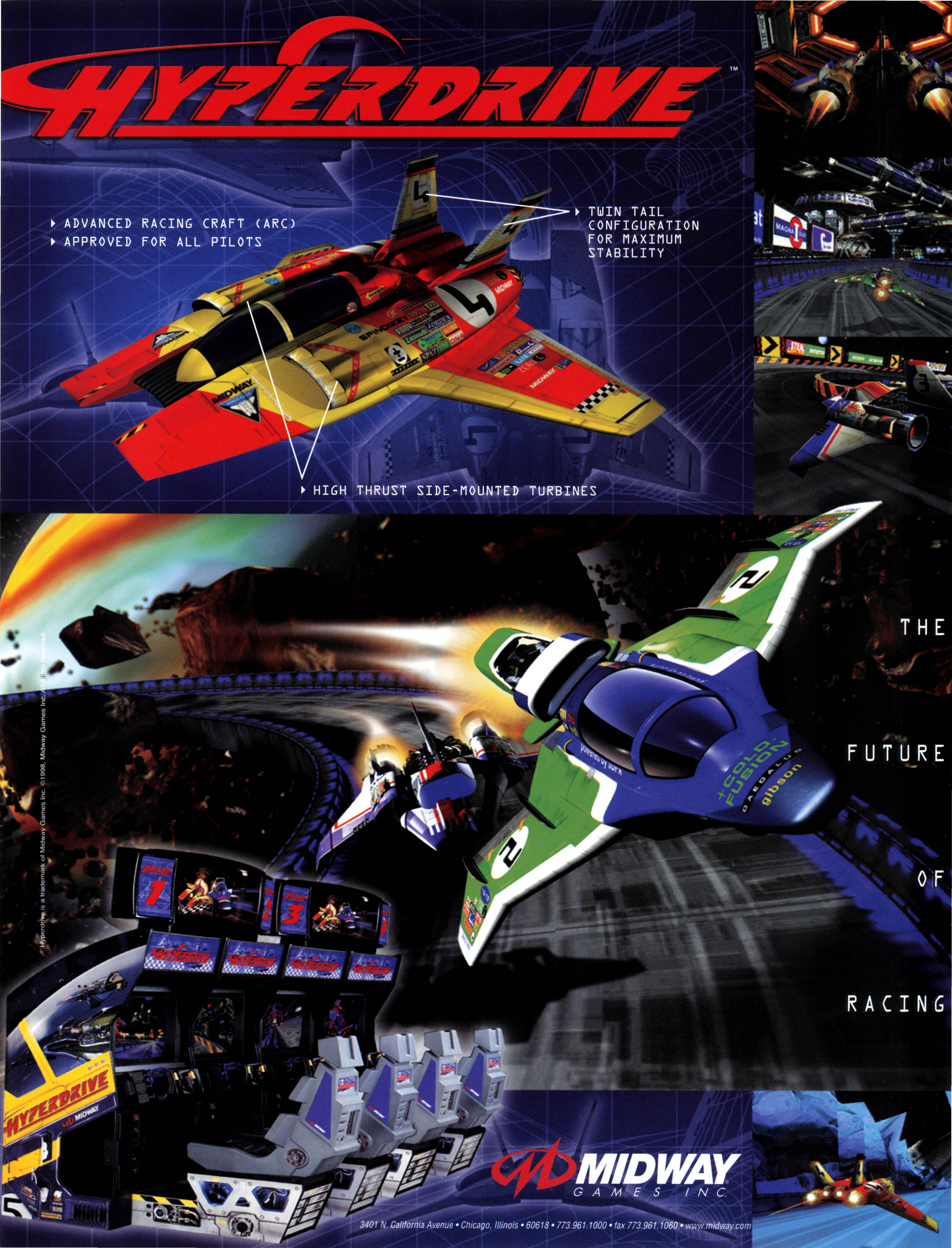
❸

The distributorship also benefitted from a spring feature story in the *Rocky Mountain News* Spotlight section titled, "Play's the Thing." The full-page photo on the cover of the section showed Rich and Bev Babich and a Rowe *Nostalgia* jukebox. Inside, the story included another photo of Rich, this time with classic Bally pinballs *Eight Ball Deluxe* and *Fireball.* The story mentioned some of Rich's customers in the field of sports: Mike Shanahan of the Denver Broncos, Hamilton, and members of the Rockies, the Avalanche, and the Nuggets. Rich sold three jukeboxes the next day. The positive image projected for the industry is a bonus. Said Rich: "We've seen direct results that show that advertising and promotion pay. I'd like to see the industry do tie-ins and advertise with other products and spokespersons. The benefit of the newspaper article and televised spots is they establish your credibility."

❹ HAPPY 50TH ANNIVERSARY to Oak Mfg. Co., which has been supplying quality bulk vending units since 1948. The company's first new product, the *Acorn Machine*, made servicing easy and set new standards for the vending industry. Company officials are proud that many of the machines sold over 40 years ago are still on location today. Oak is responsible for such innovations as fall-thru mechanisms, replacement plastic panels, and slip clutch knobs. Oak knows it's important to provide the right products and resources for customers who spend their hard-earned money to start an enterprise or expand an existing company.

❹

❺ MILLENNIUM AMUSEMENT GROUP has added electronic shooting galleries to its line of remote-controlled boats and trucks. According to company CEO Richard DeVuono, "We have been field testing the units for almost two years and are confident in the reliability and income streams generated by our new galleries." The first unit went to Paramount's Great America last year. Other installations include a 15-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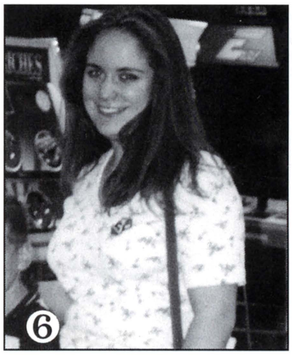
DEAD MANS COVE
5

gun pirate-themed unit at Six Flags Great Adventure and a nine-gun Western-themed unit at Six Flags Over Texas. The galleries come as small as six-gun systems for smaller parks and family fun centers. All are equipped with dollar bill acceptors and coin or token acceptors and have a one-year warranty.



⑥ **MARGIE TREGER** has joined the staff of Smiles Amusements LLC, which operates game rooms at major hotels in Las Vegas including Skybound at Stratosphere; Coney Island Emporium at New-York, New-York; Jester's Court of Games at Harrah's; the Garden of Games at Caesars Palace; and the Hard Rock Arcade at the Hard Rock Hotel. Treger, daughter of past AMOA board member Bill Treger, has two years of experience in game room operations at Las Vegas- area facilities.

JEFF BLAIR of Entropy-Alter and his wife Debbie welcomed their first child into the world May 3. Little Scott Jeffrey weighed eight pounds and measured 22 inches long. Congratulations to the new parents and their baby boy. ▲

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This combination of NSM's proven technology and new design features makes the Sapphire a real "gem" for both music operators and their locations.

To discover more about NSM's "gem," the Sapphire, please contact your local NSM distributor.

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Fax: (630) 860-5144

The CHAMPION PUB
Bally
The CHAMPION PUB

The Champion Pub

Williams Electronics Games has introduced *The Champion Pub*, a Bally pinball game that transforms a pinball playfield into a late 19th century tavern. Players are challenged to guide the silver ball through some new challenges, training and boxing 10 unique opponents in the quest to become the pub champ.

Players enter the game as "The Kid," an underdog new boxer at a thug-filled pub. The Kid needs to train to fight using three of the innovative playfield toys: the heavy bag in the middle of the playfield, a moving jump rope in the upper left, or a speed bag with two punching fists in the upper right.

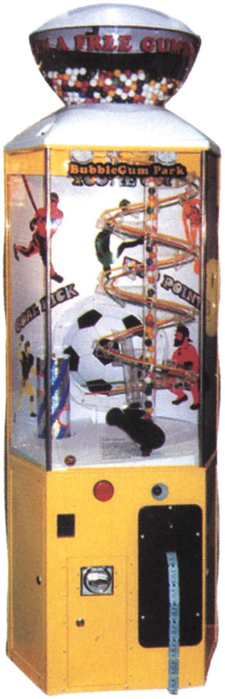
Players use these training areas to advance their Life Meter. Once the meter reaches the top, "Start Fight" is lit and The Kid is ready to fight. When the fight starts, the heavy bag rotates around, exposing The Boxer, another unique playfield toy. The Boxer has 10 personalities representing the 10 opponents The Kid must defeat. Knuckles O'Brien, Sir Winston Pounds, Franz Von Pain, and Pierre Lepunche are a few of the contenders, each with custom speech calls that add to the entertainment during the fight.

The game has a special Ball Save Post that rises from the playfield between the flippers during the beginning of each ball and the beginning of each fight. Beyond the action in the ring, there are two video modes: Poker Night and Spittin' Gallery, that challenge players to use the flippers to play a video game in the dot matrix display to capture additional rewards. There are also four multiball modes and 15 jackpot levels.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Williams, (773)961-1000; fax (773)961-1060; Web site (www.wms.com).

BubbleGum Park: Sportsmania

New-Mark Enterprises introduces a bubble gum machine that it calls an event, not just another vending machine. *The Bubble Gum Park: Sportsmania* has lights, color, action, and the music of a marching band.



After the customer inserts his coin, a gumball streaks down a colorful track and drops into the revolving ball for a wild ride. After the ride, it falls into a cannon, a "shoot" button flashes, the customer aims the cannon, and the gumball is fired high through the air. If it hits the target, an extra gumball follows right behind. If the target is missed, the customer gets the gumball shot. Locations can also vend jawbreakers if they don't want gum.

For more information, contact New-Mark Enterprises, (801)484-2227; (800)851-7674; fax (801)484-2289; Web site (www.bubblegumpark.com).

"Tall" Pecos Pony

Zamperla introduces its latest coin-operated kiddie ride: *The Pecos Pony*. It's a large attraction standing 5-1/2 feet tall. Children are treated to a western ride, themed with galloping music. It is designed with reinforced fiberglass, easy to replace parts, and a wheeled base for easy moving. According to the company, the best feature is its price.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Zamperla, (201)334-8133; (800)888-8878; fax (201) 334-6880; e-mail (zamperla@planet.net).

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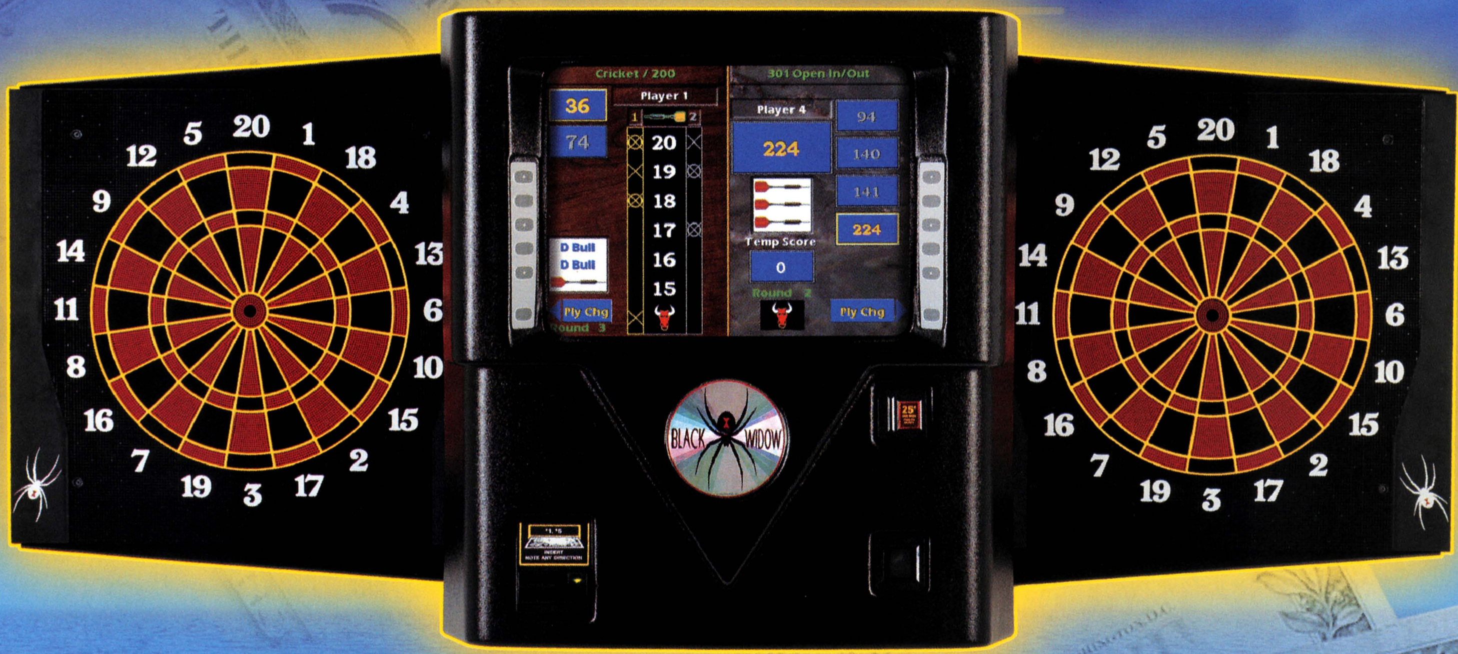
Cricket / 200
Player 1
36
74
20
19
18
17
16
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D Bull
D Bull
Ply Chg
Round 3
301 Open In/Out
Player 4
224
94
140
141
224
Temp Score
0
Round 2
Ply Chg
BLACK WIDOW
25¢
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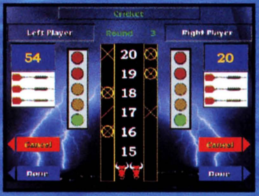
Two Dart Games

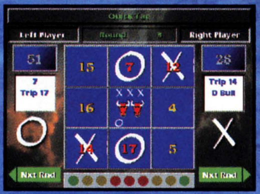
The Black Widow when played in the "split-screen" mode, is the full functional equivalent of two Galaxy games. Each side functions independently and offers all of the games and features of the Galaxy plus more.

Simultaneous Play (Head-to-Head) (Left vs. Right)

Traditional Games are more fun:

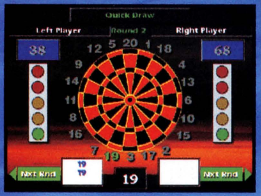

Cricket
Left Player
Round 3
Right Player
54
20
20
19
18
17
16
15
Cancel
Cancel
Done
Done

Cricket-pile on points before your opponent closes the number.

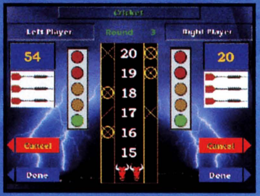

Left Player
Round
Right Player
51
28
7
Trip 17
Trip 14
D Bull
15
7
12
16
4
14
17
5
Nxt Rnd
Nxt Rnd

Tic-Tac-Darts-close the number before your opponent.

New Games for new fun:


Quick Draw
Left Player
Round 2
Right Player
38
68
12 5 20 1 18 4 13 6 10 15 2 17 3 19 7 16 8 11 14 9
19
19
19
Nxt Rnd
Nxt Rnd

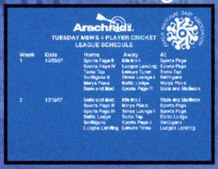
Quick Draw-when the randomly selected number pops up, be the first one to score and steal your opponent's darts.


Cricket
Left Player
Round 3
Right Player
54
20
20
19
18
17
16
15
Cancel
Cancel
Done
Done

Quicket-Cricket with a twist. Hit the magic number first and steal your opponent's darts.

Easier League Play

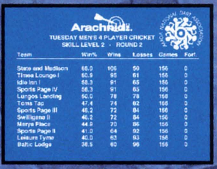
Enhanced two-way communications upload league matches, standings, and schedules. The games will be ready and waiting for the league players with no need for player cards. League fees are collected by the bill acceptor and reflected in the accounting on the screen.



Arachnid.
TUESDAY MEN'S 4 PLAYER CRICKET
LEAGUE SCHEDULE

Week	Date	Home	Away	At
1	12/09/97	Sports Page II	Idle Inn I	Sports Page
		Sports Page IV	Lungos Landing	Sports Page
		Toms Tap	Leisure Tyme	Toms Tap
		Swilligans II	Times Lounge I	Swilligans
		Marys Place	Baltic Lodge	Marys Place
		State and Mad.	Sports Page III	State and Madison
2	12/16/97	State and Mad.	Idle Inn I	State and Madison
		Sports Page III	Marys Place	Sports Page
		Sports Page IV	Times Lounge I	Sports Page
		Baltic Lodge	Toms Tap	Baltic Lodge
		Swilligans	Sports Page II	Swilligans
		Lungos Landing	Leisure Tyme	Lungos Landing

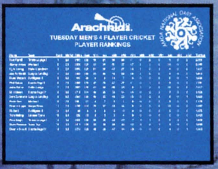
League Schedules



Arachnid.
TUESDAY MEN'S 4 PLAYER CRICKET
SKILL LEVEL 2 · ROUND 2

Team	Win%	Wins	Losses	Games	Fort.
State and Madison	68.0	106	50	156	0
Times Lounge I	60.9	95	61	156	0
Idle Inn I	58.3	91	65	156	0
Sports Page IV	58.3	91	65	156	0
Lungos Landing	50.0	78	78	156	0
Toms Tap	47.4	74	82	156	0
Sports Page III	46.2	72	84	156	0
Swilligans II	46.2	72	84	156	0
Marys Place	44.9	70	86	156	0
Sports Page II	41.0	64	92	156	0
Leisure Tyme	40.0	63	93	156	0
Baltic Lodge	38.5	60	96	156	0

League Standings



Arachnid.
TUESDAY MEN'S 4 PLAYER CRICKET
PLAYER RANKINGS

Player Ranking

Enhanced Dual Communications

In addition to the above, software enhancements and advertisements can be distributed with equal ease. For machines without a modem, completely automatic updating can be accomplished during collection with an industry-standard Jaz drive.

Advertising

An extensive catalog from Arachnid will provide pre-sold national ads and easily-localized ads. These ads capitalize on the great demographics of bars and taverns. It also advertises itself, your business, tournaments and other announcements of interest to one, some, or all of your locations.

Arachnid®

6421 Material Avenue
Rockford, Illinois 61111
800-435-8319
815-654-0212
FAX 815-654-0447

WANTED
The Instant Photo Sticker Machine
$3.00 =16 STICKERS

The Instant Photo Sticker Machine

Pierce Engineering Co. is offering *The Instant Photo Sticker Machine* with advanced optics that allow you to look directly at your image on the monitor while your photo is taken. Customers get 16 stickers, four stickers, or one jumbo sticker per sheet.

Stickers print in about 20 seconds by high quality photo printers. The single printer system prints 200 sheets per roll. The dual printer "ping-pong" system prints 400 sheets with no paper waste. There are 33 background images in each quick change image pack.

Pierce Engineering also has available the *Photo Sticker Photo Club Joy* vendor. It's designed in a compact size ideal for locations where space is a premium. Customers can either choose from the 36 prepared backgrounds or use a photograph to make the stickers.

For more information, contact Pierce Engineering, (805)375-6500; fax (805)375-6504

Slimboy Capsule Vendor

KDK Enterprises introduces the licensed *Nintendo 64 Slimboy* capsule toy vendor. Customers can get their favorite Nintendo toys like Mario and Nintendo 64 Controller Figure Key Chain Collections. The machine features recognizable Nintendo graphics and has a futuristic look in bright red and blue.

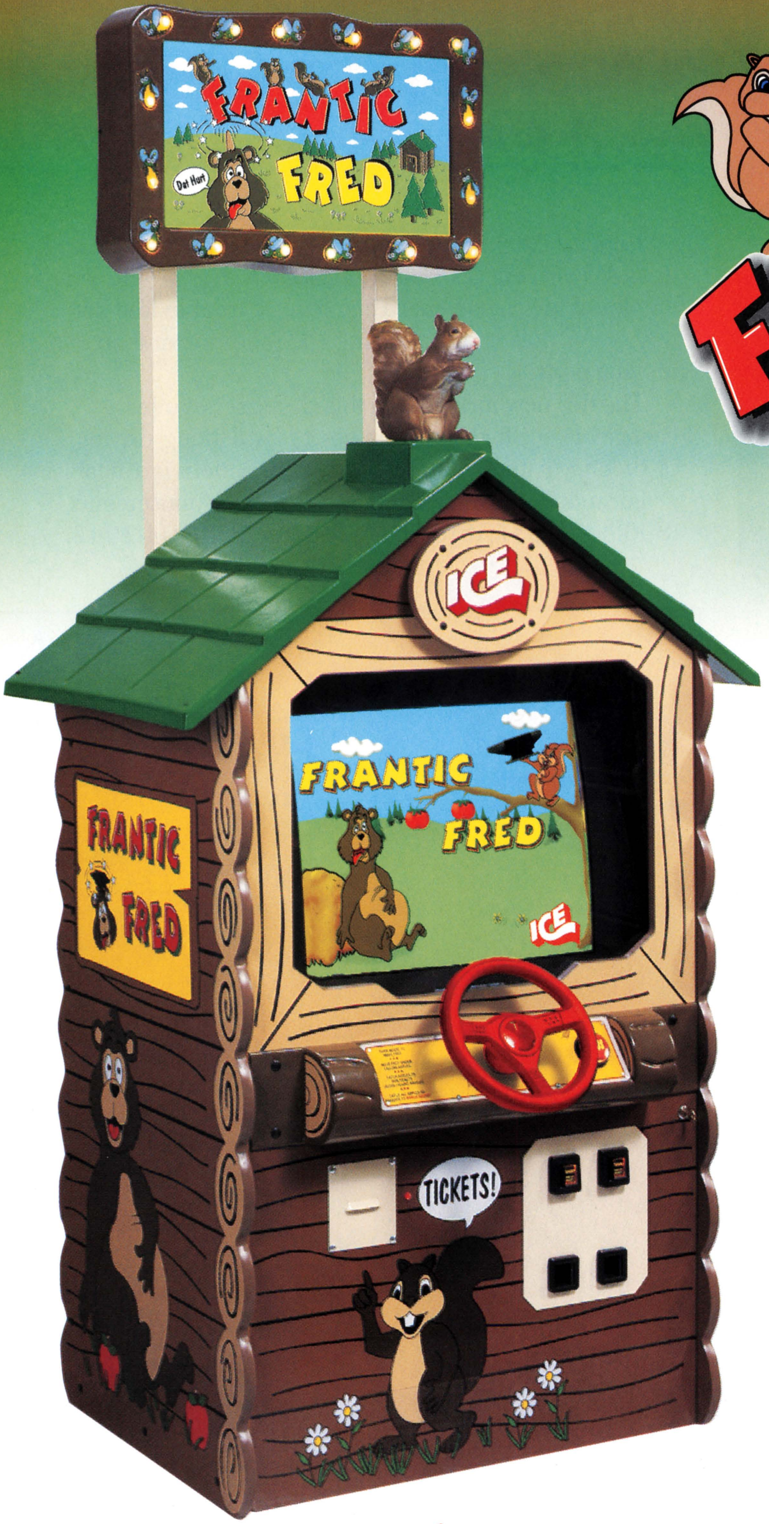
KDK has also announced new features, which are on the original *Slimboy* capsule vendor as well as the new Nintendo 64 version. The updated mechanism can be adjusted to accept $.25, $.50, $.75, or $1. By the simple flip of a switch on the back of the mechanism, the operator can change the retail price. There is also a display case that attaches to the top of two *Slimboy* machines, allowing operators to show up close the featured products in the machine.

KDK has teamed up with Atlus/Sega to couple the popular *Print Club* photo sticker machine with the *Slimboy* capsule toy vendor. Now photo booth operators can offer accessory products for customers of the photo sticker booth.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact KDK Enterprises, (954)434-5003; fax (954)680-4270; Web site (www.slimboy.com).

NINTENDO 64
PUSH
PUSH
NINTENDO 64

• STEER THE BEAR • EAT THE APPLES • WIN TICKETS



FRANTIC FRED™

The Latest In Interactive Video Redemption

NEW FROM

ICE™

- First Video Redemption game to incorporate a steering wheel into simple, but challenging, gameplay for all ages!
- Unique, Eye Catching "CABIN"ET Design.
- Available for any world voltage and currency.
- Operator-adjustable ticket payout, with "MERCY" ticket option available.
- Optional "Video CYCLONE" Progressive Bonus at game end!

ICE™

Innovative Concepts in Entertainment, Inc.
10123 Main Street, Clarence, N.Y. 14031
Phone: 716-759-0370 • Fax: 716-759-0390

★ ★ ★ WHAT'S NEW! ★ ★ ★

CATEGORIES
CARDS
ACTION
NEW
WORDS
SKILL
ADULT
INSERT COIN

Touchmaster 2000 Plus

Midway Games is now shipping *Touchmaster 2000 Plus*, a software upgrade to Touchmaster. This is the latest in Midway's regular series of software upgrades.

Touchmaster 2000 Plus features these new games: Double Take, Solitaire High Score, and 3 Peak Deluxe.

Double Take is a new fast-paced card matching game that challenges players to clear the playfield by matching cards with either the same value or the same suit. Scoring is higher for matching cards of the same value, which adds a strategic element as players try to plan ahead while making matching choices.

Solitaire High Score is a new version of Solitaire. It's a quick playing form of Solitaire that allows players to pursue high scores. 3 Peak Deluxe is a redesigned version of 3 Peak Perfection to improve the look and play appeal with brighter graphics and modified scoring. A new "Top of the Mountain" feature promotes competition as the highest scoring player stakes their claim at the top of the mountain. The phrase game WORDZ has also been updated to contain over 1,000 phrases and enhanced scoring possibilities.

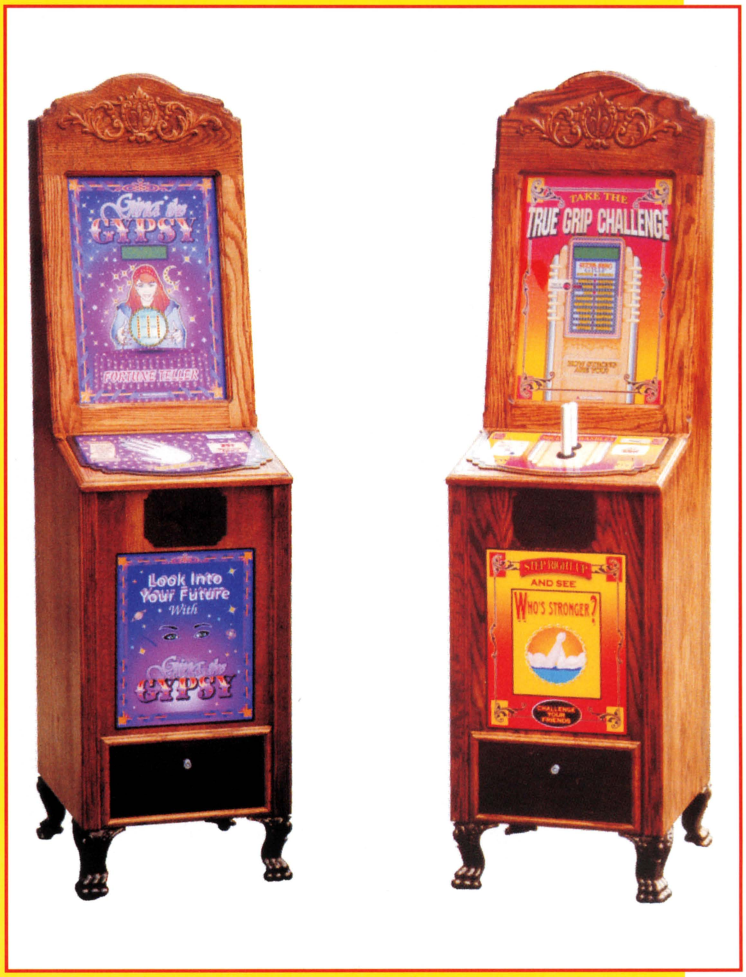
For more information, or distributor referral, contact Midway Games, (773)961-1000; fax (773)961-1060; Web site (www.midway.com).

True Grip Challenge and Gina the Gypsy

Impulse Amusements introduces two new classic games, *True Grip Challenge* and *Gina the Gypsy*, both examples of the classic line. They feature trouble-free battery or AC power, space saving 18" footprint, and no moving parts.

The two new machines in this classic series offer a change of pace for those who don't play fighting, driving, or shooting games. A variety of custom options is available.

For more information, contact Impulse Amusements, (800)446-7857; (818)767-4258; fax (818)504-3942.


Gina the GYPSY
FORTUNE TELLER
Look Into Your Future With
Gina the GYPSY
TAKE THE
TRUE GRIP CHALLENGE
STEP RIGHT UP
AND SEE
WHO'S STRONGER?
CHALLENGE YOUR FRIENDS

SHOW ME THE MONEY!

At the National Crane Network that's exactly what we do. Watch your dollars increase with...

- No $1,000 slotting fee
- Best pricing on Skill Crane Equipment and Plush products
- No 5 to 10% processing fee
- Access to national chain accounts
- Generous Profit Structure
- A team dedicated to serving YOU, the operator

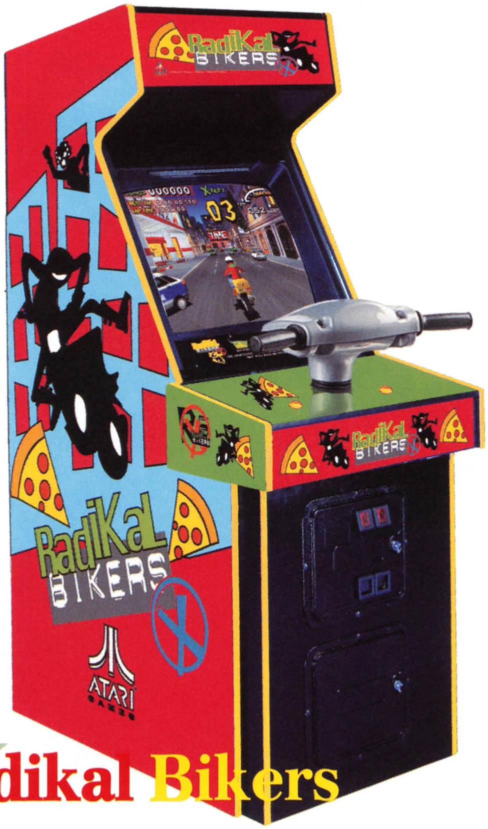
So stop wondering what you could be making... pick up the phone and call...

NCN

1-888-262-6747

and we'll **"Show you the money!"**

PLUSH 4 PLAY



Radikal Bikers

Atari Games announces the release of *Radikal Bikers*, an upright driving-style game that pits the player against the clock in a mad dash race to deliver pizza across a madcap city. Along with the unique pizza delivery theme is a bold, colorful look and strong depth of play. It will be shipped in the time-tested Midway upright cabinet.

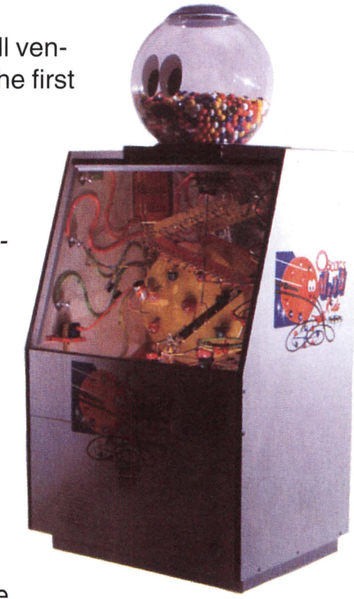
Players must deliver pizza to the finish line ahead of their computer-controlled rival and before the time expires. The excitement comes from driving Moped-style motorbikes at breakneck speeds across the colorfully congested and obstacle-ridden streets of a teeming metropolis. A variety of useful power-ups is available to help the player and shortcuts are scattered throughout the 12 courses that will give the savvy player a strong advantage.

The game was developed by the Spanish software and hardware developer, Gaelco, with the intent of producing an action game with global appeal. It also offers a challenge much like a puzzle game because it takes strategy to figure out how to snag many of the power-ups which at first glance seem impossible to reach.

Radikal Bikers is set up to encourage session play. For each of the three different circuits, rated light, medium, and hot, according to the level of difficulty, there are four shorter levels, for a total of 12 pizza delivery challenges. Each track has at least one shortcut with many tracks having two (a total of 21 shortcuts in the game). A custom controller offers players multiple degrees of freedom with their bikes. Two units can be linked.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Atari Games, (408)434-3700; fax (408)434-3776; Web site (www.atarigames.com).

Oscar's Wild Ride



QLT bills its new gumball vendor, *Oscar's Wild Ride*, as the first to sell with a sound tease mode. It's a light show and audio voice message that promotes a location and attracts customers to play *Oscar*. The tease mode plays up to six individual 10-second messages between each *Oscar* performance and is programmed to coordinate with an accelerated flashing light show.

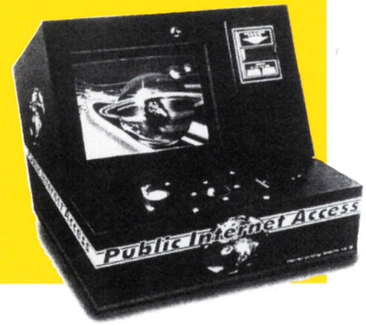
Customers insert their coins and follow Oscar (the gumball) on his magical journey as he runs down the stairs, spins around the merry-go-round, rides up the elevator, speeds down the spiral track, shoots out of a cannon onto the trampoline, and lands in a waiting hand.

For more information, contact QLT Merchandising Corp., (954)427-9998; fax (954)360-0461.

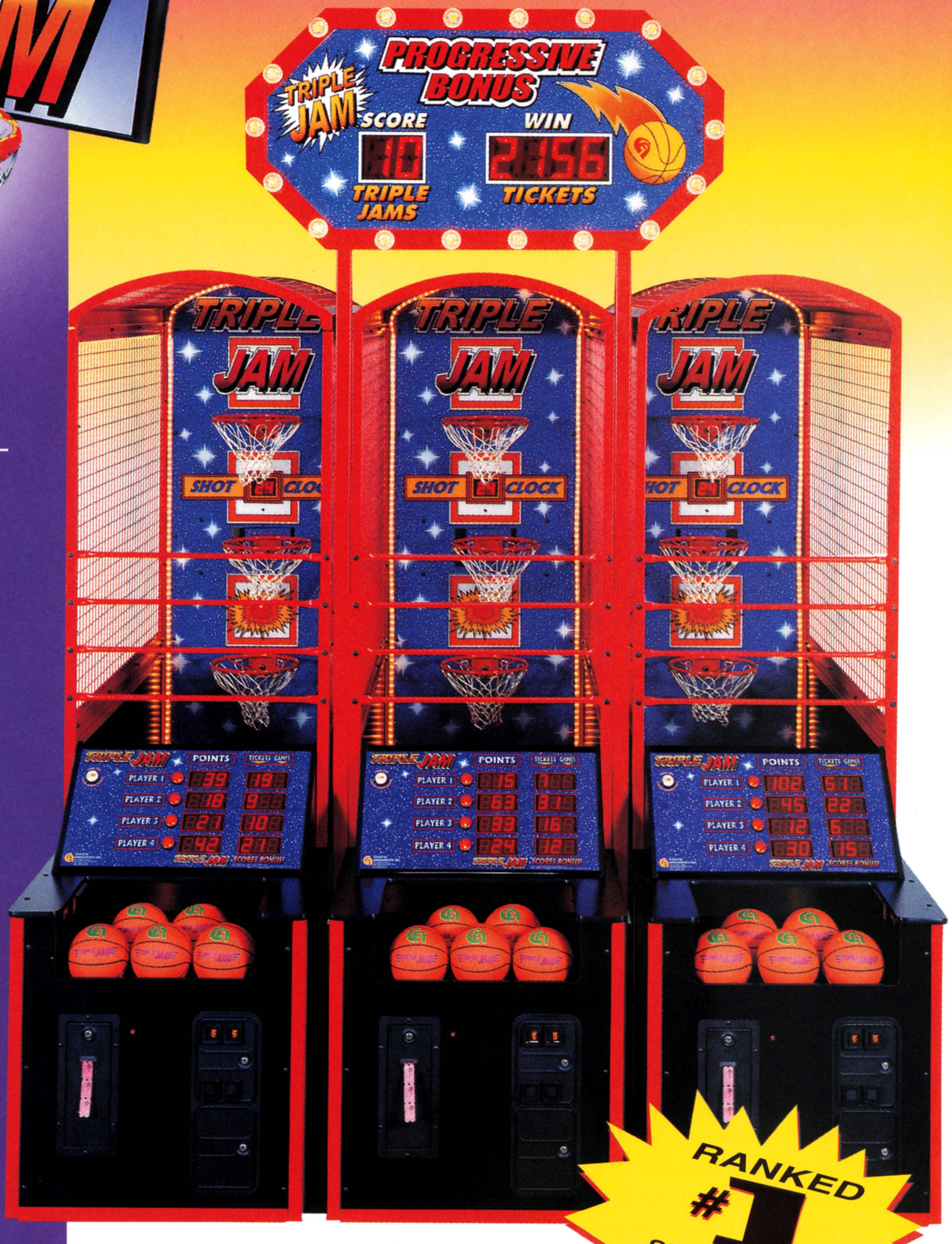
Public Internet Access

Bestco introduces the *Max 1*, a public access Internet station. Now anyone can access the World Wide Web without computer experience. Proprietary software makes it easy for newcomers and old hands alike to entertain and inform themselves by inserting a dollar bill and pushing a button. The company says it's just that simple. The Internet station uses pictures—icons—to represent different Web sites.

For more information, contact Bestco, (800) 306-4263; (864)220-6777; fax (864)220-6167.



TRIPLE THE ACTION!
TRIPLE THE CHALLENGE!
TRIPLE THE FUN!


TRIPLE JAM
PROGRESSIVE BONUS
SCORE
10
TRIPLE JAMS
WIN
2156
TICKETS
TRIPLE JAM
SHOT CLOCK
POINTS
PLAYER 1
PLAYER 2
PLAYER 3
PLAYER 4

- 1 to 4 players
- Three Baskets
- Center Moving Basket
- Dazzling Graphics
- Optional Ticket Dispenser–Dollar Bill Acceptor
- Entertaining Light and Sound Package
- Bar/Tavern Competition Setting: "Winner Stays . . . Loser Pays!"
- Sturdy Steel Construction
- Modular/Telescopic Construction for Faster Assembly
- Adjustable Redemption Ticket Setting
- Games Link for Multi-Game Competition
- Optional Progressive Bonus Sign

Specifications:
Width: 34" (86.36 cm)
Length: 102 3/4" (261 cm)
Height: 110 1/4" (280.04 cm)
Height with sign:
142 5/8" (362.27 cm)
Weight: 675 lbs. (306.8 kg)

RANKED #1 SPORTS GAME PLAYMETER EQUIPMENT POLL!

601 Prospect Street
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Fax: 732-905-6815

COASTAL AMUSEMENTS, INC.

" . . . manufacturers & distributors of coin-op redemption games . . . "

THE HOTSHOP
TATTOOS
Angels & Mermaids

Octagon and Hot Shop

Amusement Factory introduces the *Octagon* and *Hot Shop* sticker vending machines. The *Octagon's* eight columns hold enough product that it only needs servicing once a month. It's made from heavy-duty, powder coated 16-gauge steel, has added security with screw type locks, heavy duty V4 coin mechanisms that can vend up to $1, and it comes with a 30" footprint.

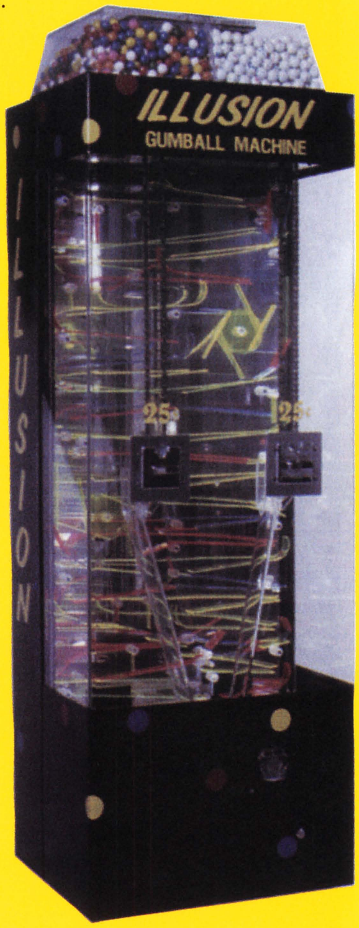
The *Hot Shop* vends decals, temporary tattoos, and sports/collector cards and has a capacity for up to 1,300 items. It is easily customized with interchangeable logos and rainbows and comes in red or black. Custom colors are available at an additional charge.

For more information, contact Amusement Factory, (800)501-8177; fax (602)508-0524.

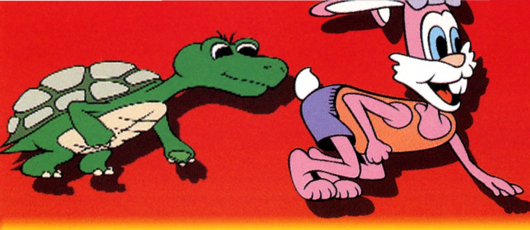
The Illusion and Wowie

Global Gumballs introduces *The Illusion* and *Wowie* gumball machines. The kinetic vendor, the *Illusion,* features two different shows and three rotating songs (licensed from major hit artists). It has two coin mechanisms to help prevent downtime, and two gum/candy departments for dual product selection, and it's priced right.

Wowie begs the question: Have you ever seen gum or candy do the rumba? The machine transforms gum or candy into an acrobatic show. It features music sound effects, interchangeable customized sound chips, and it's engineered for high-traffic, continuous use. The gumball goes up the screw-like elevator, left over the gears, down the teeter totters, through the tornado, in the spiral, then on the track which spirals around the elevator.



For more information, contact Global Gumballs, (334)621-2993; fax (334)621-8850.



ISLAND DESIGN INC.

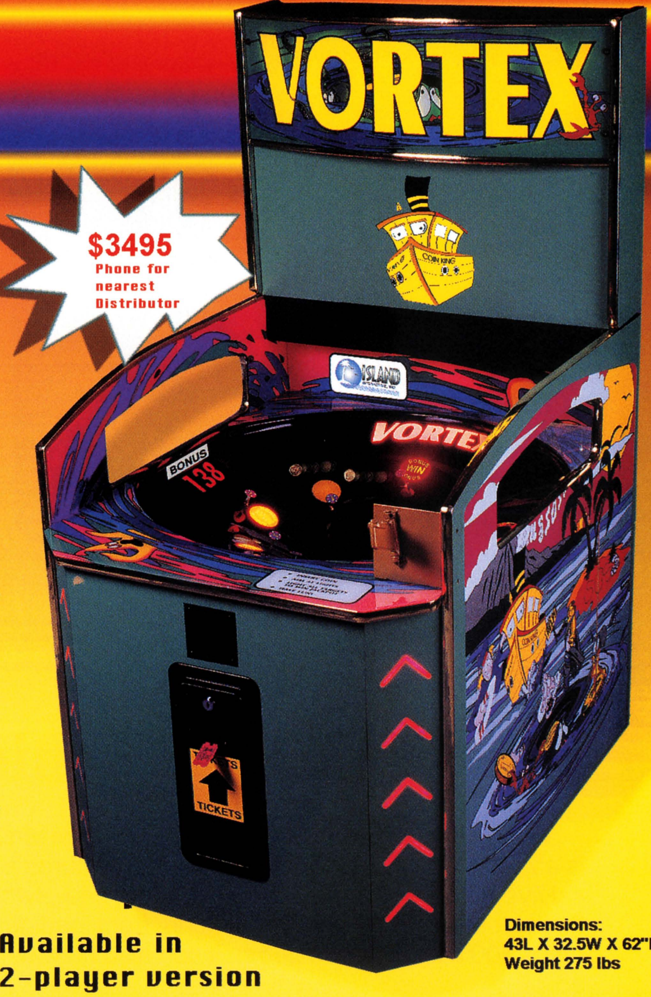
Presents

GREAT GAMES

.... Created By Kids

for kids!

VORTEX™



$3495
Phone for nearest Distributor

ATTRACTIVE

- In your face cabinet design allows spectators to view the funnel action from a distance or up close without distracting the player.
- Playful graphics that are attractive to boys and girls of all ages.
- Beautifully molded CUSTOM PLASTIC FUNNEL allows attractive multi-colored backlighting without cutting up the play field.
- Bright illuminating ATTRACT ARROWS embedded into the front of the cabinet attracts spectators.

DURABLE AND RELIABLE

- Custom target switches eliminates the need for adjustments.
- Optical and Mechanical coin validation.
- Uses the same reliable PCB that is found in Spider Stompin Deluxe and Tortoise and the Hare.

ADDICTIVE GAME PLAY

- OVERFLOWING CASHBOXES TELL THE STORY!
- Animated AGGRESSIVE BONUS that teases the player with a chance to win every time.
- Animated target graphics that MAGICALLY light.
- Very long coin play for a coin rolling game.
- Can play multiple coins at the same time.

Available in
2-player version

Dimensions:
43L X 32.5W X 62"H
Weight 275 lbs

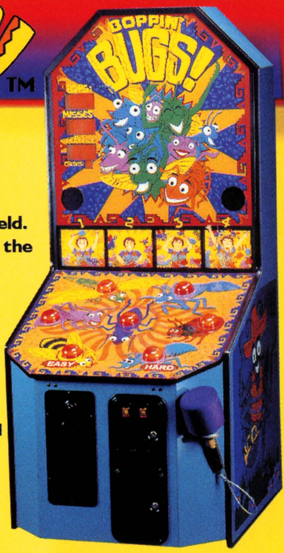
Tortoise and the Hare™

High speed two player stomp to the finish game. Players try to stomp on the light buttons, the faster they stomp the faster the buttons light up and the faster the player moves around the track to the finish line!

Dimensions:
57L X 65W X 77"H
Weight 300 lbs

SPECIAL
NON-SKID
FLOOR

BOPPIN' BUGS!™



Get slap happy with BOPPIN' BUGS! Smash those pesky "bugs" with the mallet as they light up the playfield. The faster you squash'em the faster they light up.

Dimensions:
37L X 32W X 72"H
Weight 250 lbs

SPIDER STOMPIN' DELUXE™

Sequal to the award winning SPIDER STOMPIN'. Featuring the great game play that both kids and adults love.

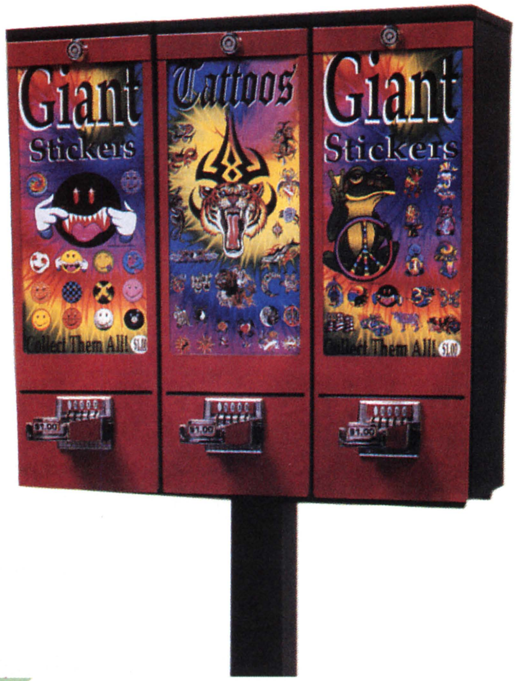
SPECIAL
NON-SKID
FLOOR

Dimensions:
57L X 41W X 66"H
Weight 250 lbs

ISLAND DESIGN INC.

3343 Industrial Drive #8 Santa Rosa, Ca. 95403
Ph (707) 547-4850 fax (707) 547- 4858

VORTEX ©1997
SPIDER STOMPIN' and BOPPIN BUGS ©1996
TORTISE AND THE HARE ©1995
Distributed by Island Design Inc.
Developed by Island Interactive, Inc.



Giant Sticker Machine

Brand Imports introduces a giant sticker machine that is adaptable to all bulk vending racks. It features a vertical five-coin mechanism set for $1 vend; one-, two-, or three-column setup; powder coating; front loading; and it holds 300 stickers per column. It can also be wall-mounted.

For more information, contact Brand Imports, (800)967-3048; (602)443-3378; fax (602)443-9512.

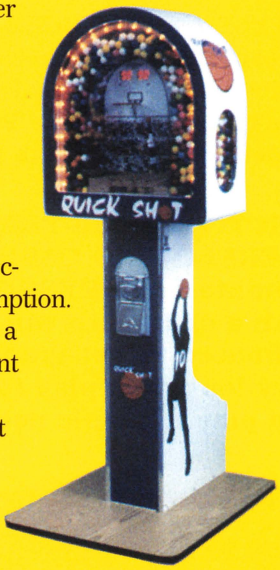
Quick Shot Basketball Vendor

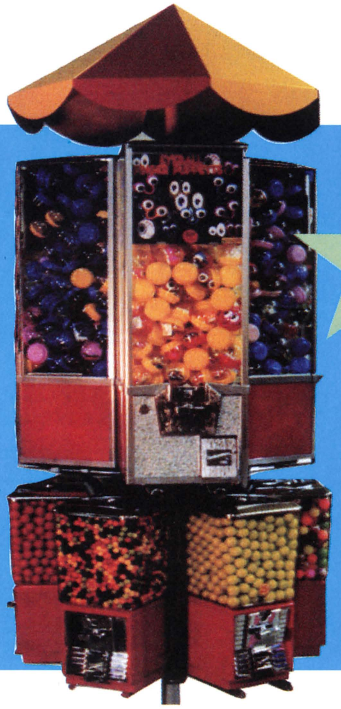
Quick Silver Development's new *Quick Shot Basketball Vendor* was designed specifically as a bulk vendor, a ticket redemption game, or a combination bulk vendor/ticket redemption game that appeals to customers of all ages.

The customer is always a winner with this interactive game. The potential rewards are adjustable. Once a coin is deposited the clock starts and the player has 10 seconds to use the shooter mechanism to score as many baskets as possible. After play time is finished, *Quick Shot Basketball* dispenses products or tickets corresponding to the number of shots made.

This piece is for operators who want their customers to have the immediate gratification of receiving a prize and also a secondary prize via the ticket redemption. The machine has vivid graphics, a four-digit sound chip, and brilliant rope lighting.

For more information, contact Quick Silver Development, (702)888-8100; fax (702)888-8111.



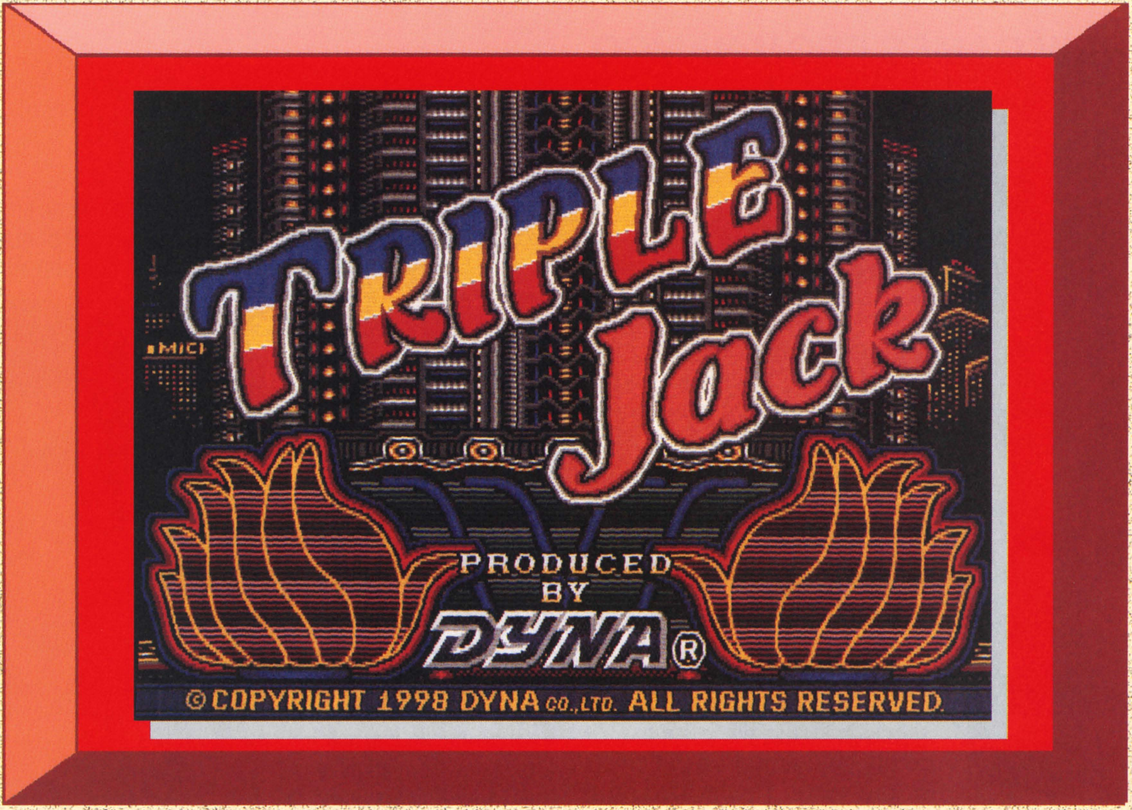


The Kiosk

Northwestern introduces a new concept called the revolving kiosk. It's built to hold from three to 80 series machines on the top level and six to 60 series on the bottom level. With nine machines the variety of product and volume is equal to a TriRise type of stand. The advantage is that this can be put in a smaller space because of its revolving feature.

For more information, contact Northwestern, (800)942-1316; fax (815)942-4417; e-mail (www.nwcorp.com).

Coming Soon... with a brand new Jackpot!!


TRIPLE Jack
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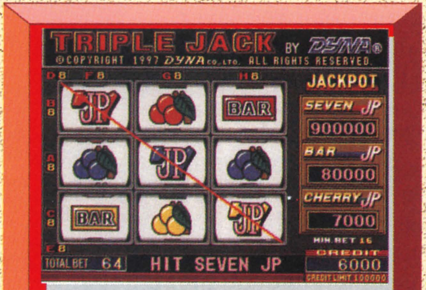
Our New 8 Liners "TRIPLE JACK" feature Three different JACKPOTS as it's title name


TRIPLE JACK BY DYNA®
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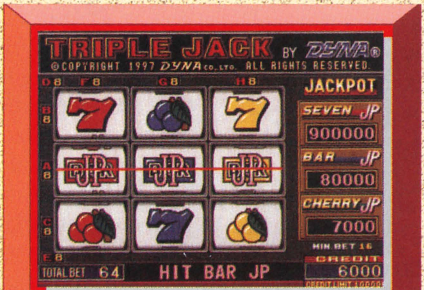
JACKPOT
SEVEN JP
900000
BAR JP
80000
CHERRY JP
7000
MIN BET 16
CREDIT
6000
TOTAL BET 64
HIT SEVEN JP

SEVEN JACKPOT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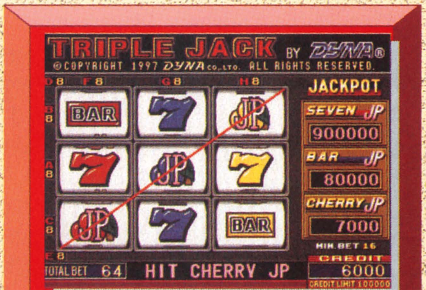
JACKPOT
SEVEN JP
900000
BAR JP
80000
CHERRY JP
7000
MIN BET 16
CREDIT
6000
TOTAL BET 64
HIT BAR JP

BAR JACKPOT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JACKPOT
SEVEN JP
900000
BAR JP
80000
CHERRY JP
7000
MIN BET 16
CREDIT
6000
TOTAL BET 64
HIT CHERRY JP

CHERRY JACKPOT

Also features (same as our ***CHERRY MASTER*** *series)*
Various types of Double-Up games

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Tel: +81-429-28-8741 • Fax: +81-429-28-8745

★ ★ ★ WHAT'S NEW! ★ ★ ★

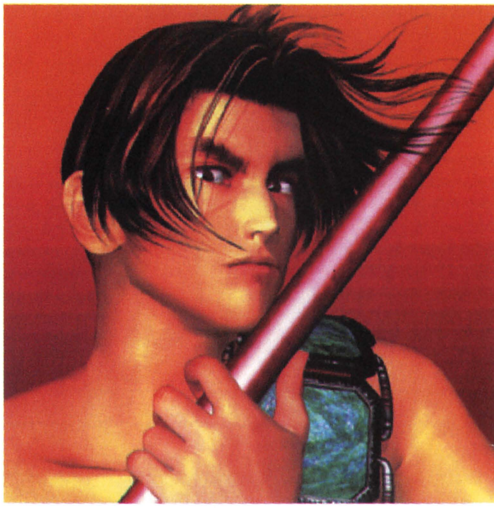
FOUR NEW GAMES FROM NAMCO

namco
FAMILY BOWL

Family Bowl

This four-player video game has an irresistible bowling theme. There are two modes—five or 10 frames. Special features include a sliding lane—when a ball goes into gutters at a certain frame, the lane slides right and left in the next frame; Uncle Afro's Aid—when the first throw results in one pin left or a split, Uncle Afro appears and fans the pins or stamps his feet on the lane; The Red Pin—a player who scores a strike with the randomly appearing red pin can use the secret Uncle Afro on Skate Board command; and Challenge the Strike—when a player scores a perfect game, he can continue bowling as long as he scores strikes.

Soul Calibur



Soul Calibur is a one- or two-player video game kit with a weapon-based fighting theme. Players select one of numerous default characters and master their fighting to conquer all opponents. The System 12 PCB fuels the game and through the use of motion capture Namco has created a smooth, animated, and challenging fighting game.

Characters move in full 3D thrust blocks and parries via the new Guard Impact System. Counterattacks and weapon weight determine strength and speed. It combines weapon-based martial arts styles from all over the world. Players use three attack buttons, one guard button, and a joystick control.

Soul Calibur is complete with the ever-popular Time Release feature. There are time released characters, stages, and weapons. This original concept by Namco keeps the players coming back.

Jackpot

Jackpot is a one-player coin pusher redemption game similar to familiar coin pushers. Players insert coins onto a playfield filled with other coins of the same type. A vertically moving tray moves forward and backward constantly. The goal is for coins to fall onto the playfield and act as a wedge to push one or more coins off an edge and down into the hopper. The coins that fall into the hopper are then converted into tickets.

JACKPOT
namco

Typical pushers have only one ticket dispenser; *Jackpot* has three to add excitement during the payout sequence. There are other differences including the method of loading coins (instead of an aiming mechanism, coins are directed via the use of a chute delivery system that can be aimed in a free range, left to right and up to 70 coins can be played at one time). The cabinet side and front panels are enhanced with graphics featuring neon lights from the Las Vegas strip. There are other decorative features.

Panic Park

WELCOME
PANIC PARK
namco

Panic Park is a one- or two-player dedicated 50" deluxe video game with a variety of stages and simple controls to attract players of all ages. The players use one oversized joystick. The number one and number two player joysticks overlap on the same rail so when two players compete they can push each other's joystick away to gain an advantage.

Each game consists of five of the game's 25 stages and are selected at random. Stages include obstacle courses, time trials, and "gathering" to name a few. Players run down a path while avoiding cactus coming towards them (it's fun to push your opponent into a cactus!) or dodge a herd of stampeding buffalo in the obstacle course stage. In the time trial stage, players run down a rickety bridge or jump from column to column without falling. Then there's the gathering; catch the frenzied chickens or collect coins while avoiding da bombs! ▲

For more information, or distributor referral, on all of these new games, contact Namco's sales office, (630)238-2248; fax (630)238-9333; Web site (www.namco.com).

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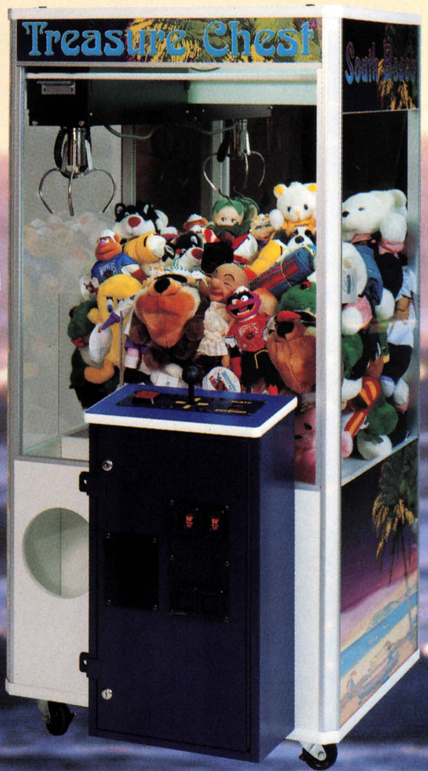
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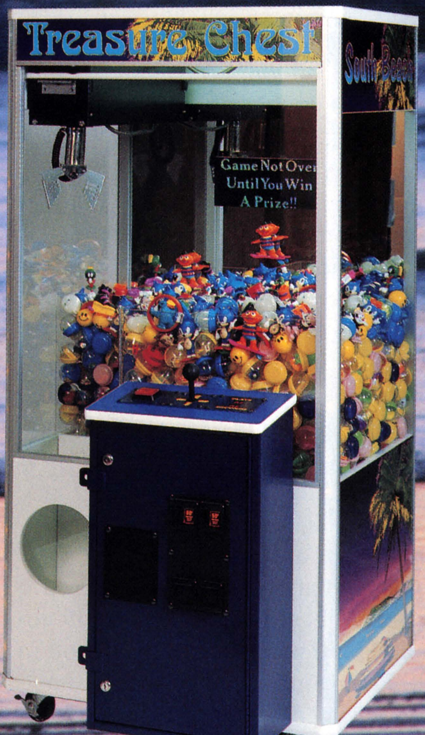
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Game Not Over Until You Win A Prize!!

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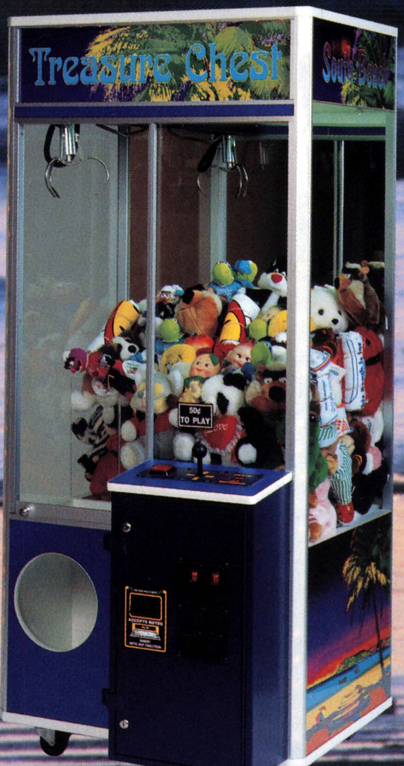
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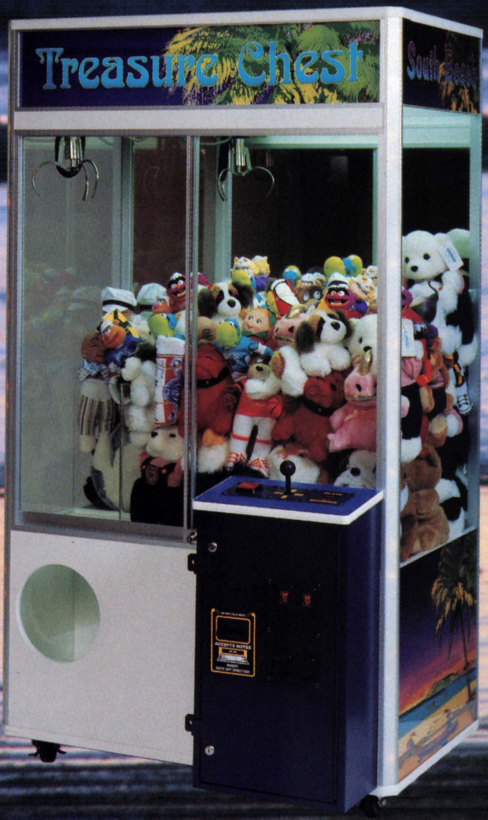
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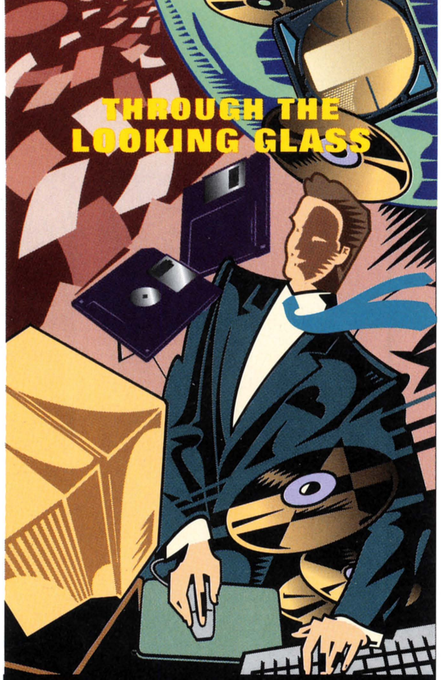


THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

VALERIE COGNEVICH

The consumer market is a giant. E3 showcased what's new and what's next in game software for home consoles, PCs, and the Internet.

E3 fun to go

Over 40,000 people from 80 countries took the opportunity to view the latest and greatest in software for personal computers, home game consoles, and the Internet. Also on tap was an impressive seminar program to help them in their businesses and understand trends and changes within the industry.

They converged in Atlanta at the World Congress Center the end of May and walked 534,000 square feet of exhibit space occupied by 440 exhibitors. The booths from the majors were more like towns; reception desks directed attendees to what they wanted to see or who they wanted to talk with.

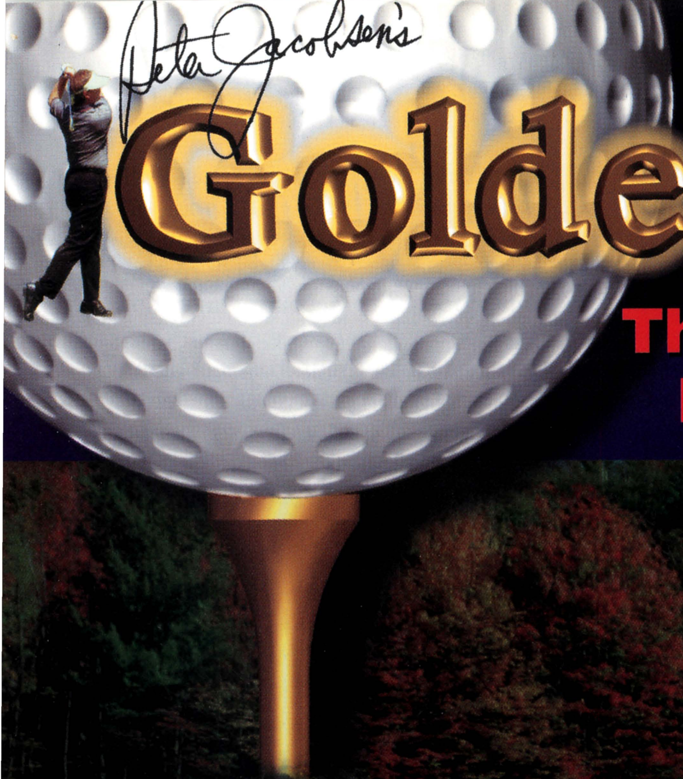
It was the fourth annual Electronic Entertainment Expo, referred to as E3, sponsored by the International Digital Software Association (IDSA). IDSA defines itself as “the only United States association exclusively dedicated to serving the business and public affairs interests of companies that publish video and computer games for video game consoles, personal computers, and the Internet. IDSA members collectively account for more than 85 percent of the $5.6 billion in revenues generated by U.S. entertainment software in 1997, and billions more in export sales of U.S.-made entertainment software. The IDSA offers services to entertainment software publishers including a global anti-piracy program, business and consumer research, government relations, and First Amendment and intellectual property protection efforts.”

Let's take a look at some mind-boggling numbers to put this multibillion dollar industry in perspective. A Show Daily put out by the publishers of *Game Week* magazine included a state of the industry report and forecast, which showed that sales of video game console software topped $3.3 billion in 1997, up from $2 billion the previous year; PC entertainment software sales were $1.8 billion, up from 1.7. Combined it's a grand total of $5.1 billion in game sales for the home market. Add to that some $500 million in game rentals, according to the Video Software Dealers Association.

> ***“Sales of video game console software topped $3.3 billion in 1997.”***

The report quoted David Lowenstein, president of IDSA, predicting an increase of at least 25 percent in overall software sales for 1998. He based his insight on the installed platform base of 16 million in 1997 being increased by some 30 million this year. Also the number of household computers, now estimated at 42 million, should increase by about five million. Gary Cabelhouse, CEO of Fairfield Research, was also quoted with these predictions for 2001: 73 million households will have at least one, but possibly more, advanced platform consoles, up 180 percent from 1997; 60.5 homes will have at least one PC of which 44.2 million will be

Peter Jacobsen's Golden Tee '98™



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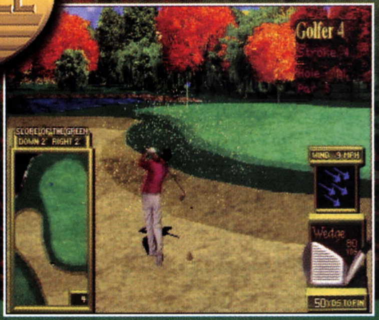
ARBOR HILL

Majestic New England Woods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Hole
Par
SLOPE OF THE GREEN
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WIND 9 MPH
Wedge
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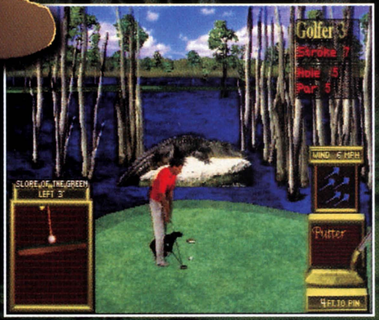
Golfer 3
Stroke 7
Hole 5
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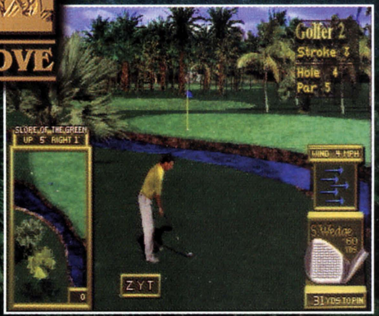
Golfer 2
Stroke 3
Hole 4
Par 5
SLOPE OF THE GREEN
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PC gamer homes, up more than 25 percent from 1997; and there will be 250 million connect hours of multiplayer online gaming, an astounding 267 percent projected growth from 1997.

The major focus of E3 was video games and there were some 1,600 current and upcoming games to see and play in addition to a host of other software. After playing some of the games, it was obvious that most of them had awesome 3D graphics. One company specializing in 3D is 3Dfx Interactive with its popular Voodoo graphics engine.

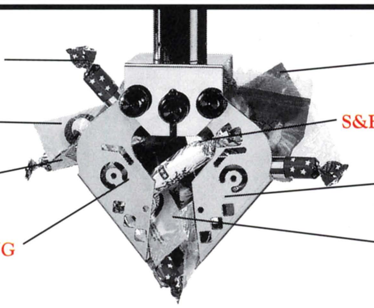
The company develops high performance, cost effective 3D media processors, software, and related technology designed to enable a highly immersive interactive and realistic 3D experience for personal computers, coin-operated arcade systems, and location based entertainment. It recently introduced the second generation, Voodoo2, which adds many new performance features. Its base configuration is 192-bit memory (remember the 8-bit and 16-bit we are so familiar with?). To illustrate just how rapidly this technology is advancing, consider this: Voodoo 2 is three times more powerful than the original Voodoo technology introduced a short two years ago. Many game developers are using Voodoo 2 in their PC CD-ROM games as seen at the show.

Those in coin-op would have seen some familiar names like Sega, Namco, Capcom, Midway, Konami, Atari, and Jaleco. But it was not the divisions we've grown to love. But there was little for coin-op at E3. These are giants in the home industry. Their lists of titles were immense and Capcom even showed a game developed for coin-op but not yet introduced in that market. There were some of our favorite arcade games like *California Speed* and *Off Road Challenge*, complete with a showing in an arcade-style cabinet.

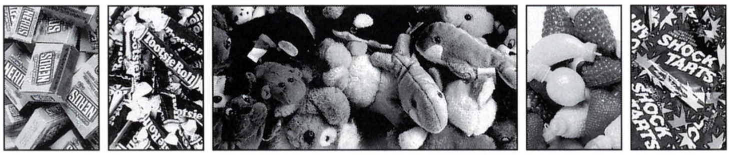
In a number of booths there were signs proclaiming the games there were "arcade quality" or "just like in the arcade." Great plug for the coin-op industry to be the benchmark for what is expected in game play. While coin-op generally is offered a game before the home market gets it, it's a touchy subject in coin-op circles when the two come out roughly the same time.

But E3 is for the consumer market, a market caught up in a cyclone of creative, innovative games by imaginative genius developers. The lesson (goal?) here for coin-op is that some of that creativity found in these fertile minds will find its way into developing games for coin-op. Many of the E3 attendees were game developers or game developer-hopefuls, either trying to secure a marketing arm for their games or talking to game publishers about how to get involved.

We stopped two of these people and talked with them about what they



CANDY CRANE MIXES



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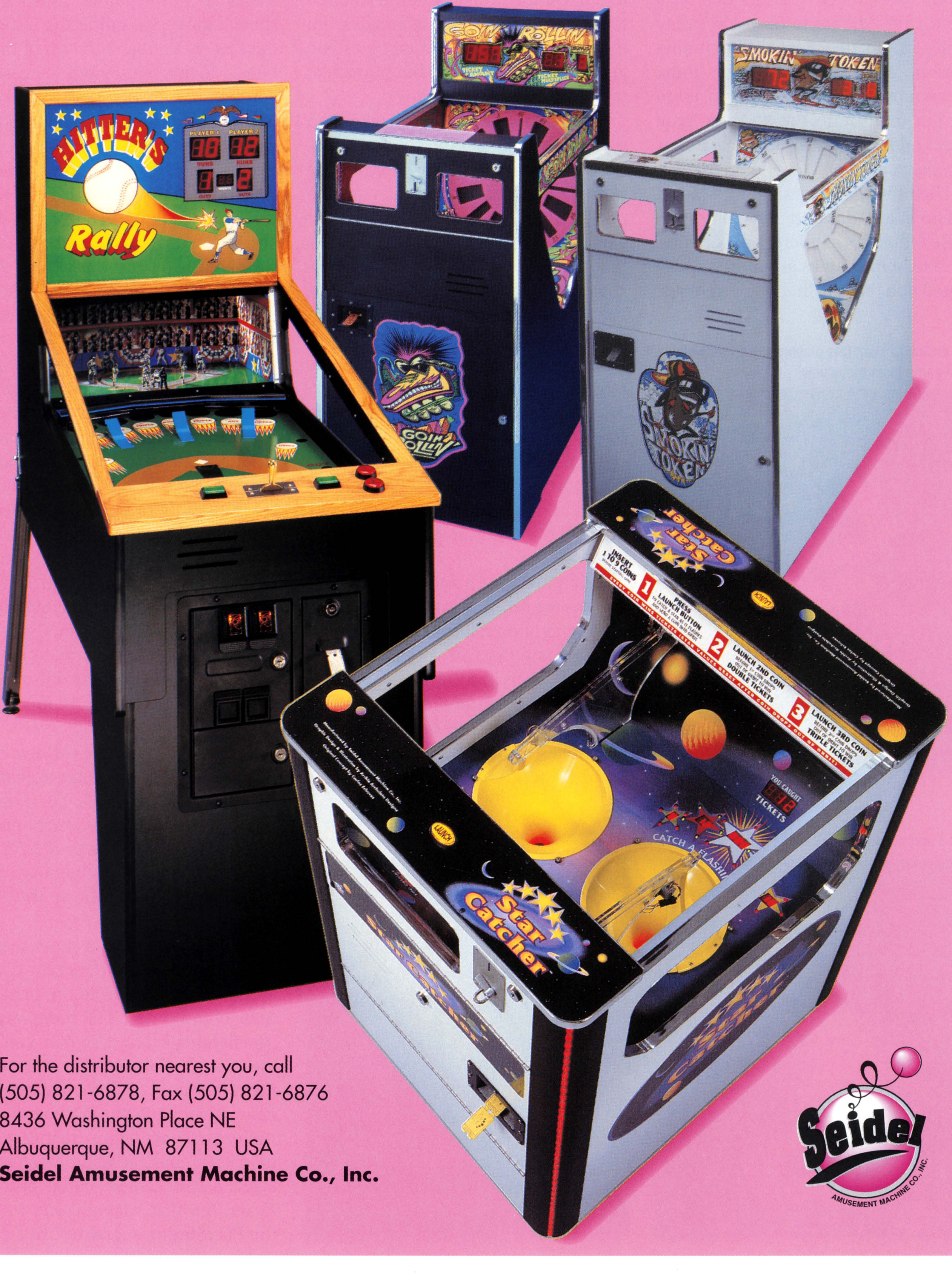
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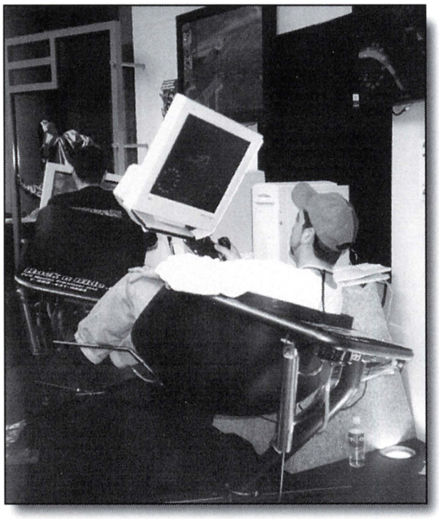
hoped to accomplish in the home market. We even touched on the subject of the coin-op industry. One said, "I'm here checking out the show, but next year I want to have a game with me to push. I think I have a great idea for a game, one I'd love to play. Do I play games in arcades? Not so much anymore because the ones for the home are so much better than they used to be. I'm really into the strategy type games and can play for hours at home. Arcade games don't let you do that."

The other game designer added, "I still go in arcades and play games because I think it's a different experience. Yes, the home games are more sophisticated and realistic than they were just a few years ago, but there's something to be said about playing in a game room. When I go to buy a game for my home system, I'll usually buy one that I've enjoyed in an arcade. I'm not saying that some home games aren't better than some I've seen in arcades, but there will always be some games you just can't experience in the home like they were meant to be played."

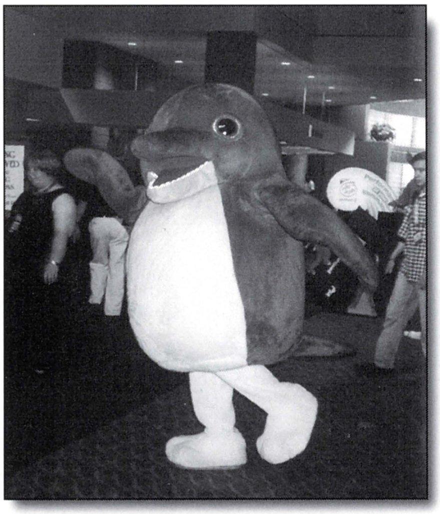
The Virtual Cockpit lets players experience playing a game in a unique way.



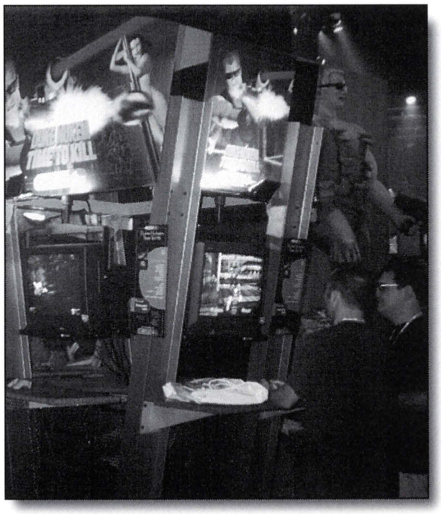
One man we ran into, who had spent many years in the coin-op industry before leaving to work in the consumer market, put a damper on the prospects of enticing these brilliant game designers to coin-op. He claims that the economics are just not there anymore for coin-op games. People are genuinely surprised at the number of arcade games sold. One designer was shocked when we told him that the most popular game of all time, *Pac-Man* followed by his better half, *Ms. Pac-Man* only sold about 200,000 coin-op units combined. And remember, those were the best selling games! We didn't even want to get into how many games are sold now—even a great one.

Compare that number to the 3.8 million copies of Myst, introduced in 1993 and often referred to as the best-selling computer software game of all time. Of course, some agreed that a game with exceptionally good play could be altered to accommodate the intricacies of both home and arcade, and it would be beneficial to get the initial exposure in game rooms. However, the economics will definitely have to be there for that to happen.

Intel's mascot greeted attendees.



Duke Nukem: Time to Kill was popular.



There were exhibitors showing an absolutely amazing array of accessories for home games. Joysticks and special gloves to guide the action on the screen were just the tip of the iceberg. Moving seats, vibrating cushions, guns, enhancers of all kinds, and steering wheels promised action about as close to real as possible. Talk about the arcade experience coming home, the Cockpit Group showed The Virtual Cockpit accompanied by this hype: "Fed up with playing state of the art simulations from the desktop? Ready for the next level of affordable realism? Then you are ready to climb into The Virtual Cockpit."

For less than $250, serious game players can buy a full-size cockpit that works with all simulation gaming software, has under-seat speaker mounts to let the player feel the action, and an optional door and lid kit. ThrustMaster, a leading manufacturer of game controllers for PC-based entertainment, announced an officially licensed NASCAR racing wheel, the NASCAR RacePro, for the Sony PlayStation and Nintendo 64. In addition, there were companies that write how-to manuals for many of the popular titles, companies that package games, and CD restorers.

Manufacturers like Midway and Namco announced home releases of popular coin-op games. For example, Midway Home Entertainment promoted the soon-to-be-released *NFL Blitz*. Kordell Stewart, the Pittsburgh Steelers' quarterback, was in the booth signing autographs.

Namco's *Tekken 3*, a super mega hit in arcades everywhere, is now ready to entertain the masses in the privacy of their own homes. The company said "the fighting action is so real, you'll feel the pain." Namco also announced home releases of *Tales of Destiny*, an epic journey for the lost secret of the Aetherians with flying dragons, vicious monsters, and fantastic locales; *Soul Blade*, a 15th century battle; and *Ridge Racer*, the first racing game to grace the PlayStation's greatest hits collec-

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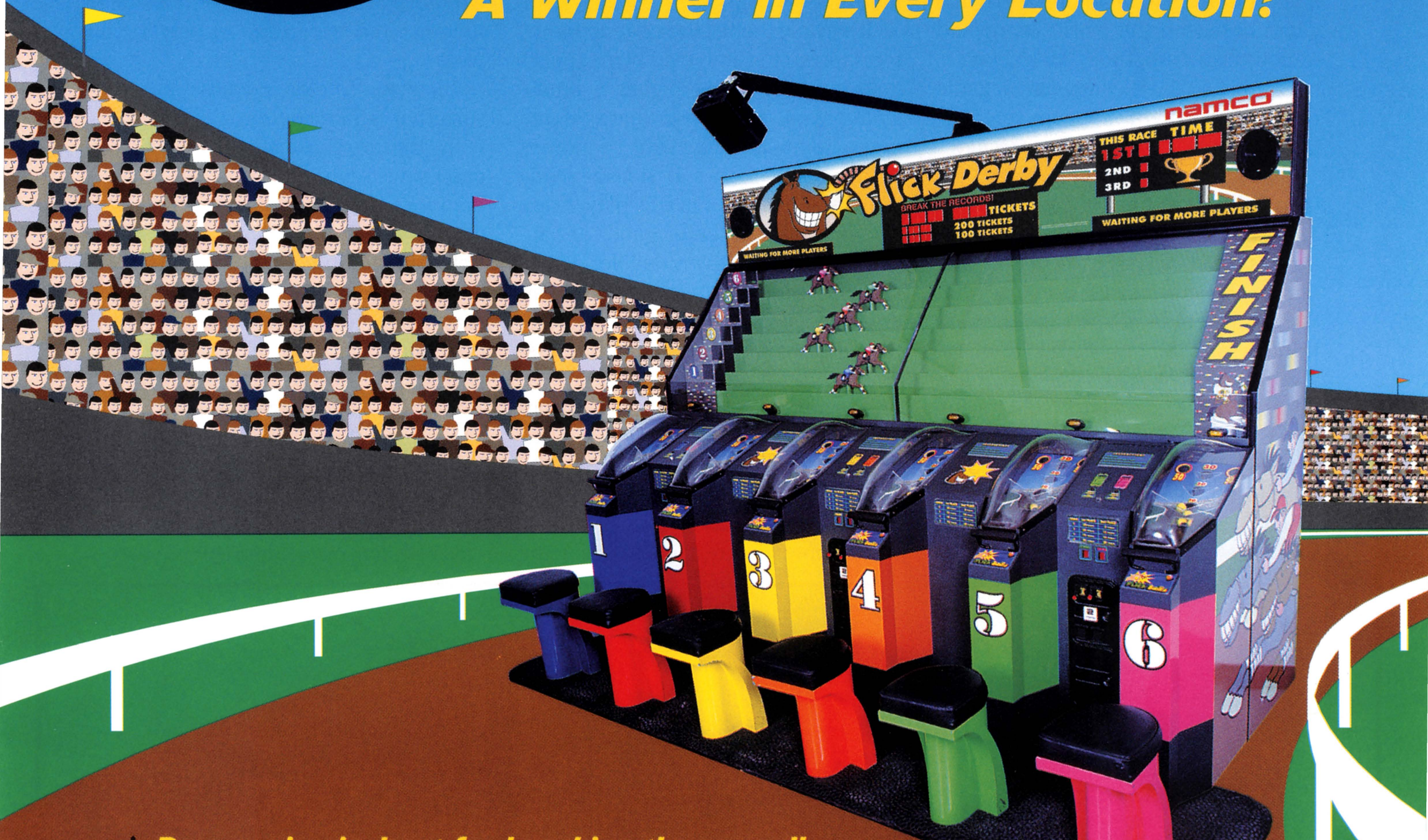
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Activision has signed a deal with marvel Comics to develop an original game based on the world renowned mutant franchise, the X-Men. Players have enjoyed these characters in game rooms with several Capcom releases, most recently *X-Men vs. Street Fighter.*

Hasbro Interactive recently acquired the Atari Classic Games library and announced the launch of *Centipede,* touted by Hasbro as "a fully rendered 3D bug blastin' bonanza that the arcade could never handle." *Centipede* wasn't the only classic to be revived with a 3D twist. *Asteroids*, introduced in 1978 to arcades, sold for the Atari 2600 home system when that home system was launched, and then offered for every home system after that, has been resurrected once again. This time with 3D graphics (those meteors and alien ships have never looked better!), CD quality sound, and extra features. Even *Pac-Man*, our beloved favorite fuzzy ball, has been reintroduced by its creator, Namco, with brilliant 3D graphics and new mazes.

It's ironic that as the coin-op industry is forced to climb ever higher peaks in its quest for newer, higher technology to be able to surpass what's offered in the home, there's a revived interest in the arcade classics. Besides reviving some of the classics in 3D, players are also finding that the originals are appealing. One player/developer we talked to thought the old games were amazing. Of course, he was just a toddler during the legendary *Pac-Man* era.

To him and others these are classics as awe inspiring as a '57 Chevy to car buffs. "I went to an arcade," he began, "that had a section just for old games like *Galaga*, which is one of my favorites now," he explained. "I play the classics more than I play the newer games when I visit my favorite game room." This player could very well have been referring to a Sega GameWorks location. Visit one and there are those treasured classics set in unique cabinets designed for that nostalgic feeling. And according to players, it works.

Since the coin-op industry has been sensitive about potential problems with advisory stickers being applied to games, we realized that home games, both for PCS and consoles, are also targeted. The Entertainment Software Rating Board, one of the exhibitors, is an independent board that with the support of the interactive industry has developed a standardized rating system for all entertainment software. The ESRB's icons appear on the packages of over 4,000 products sold in the United States and Canada. There is now a new division, ESRB Interactive, that will provide consumers and parents with objective information regard-

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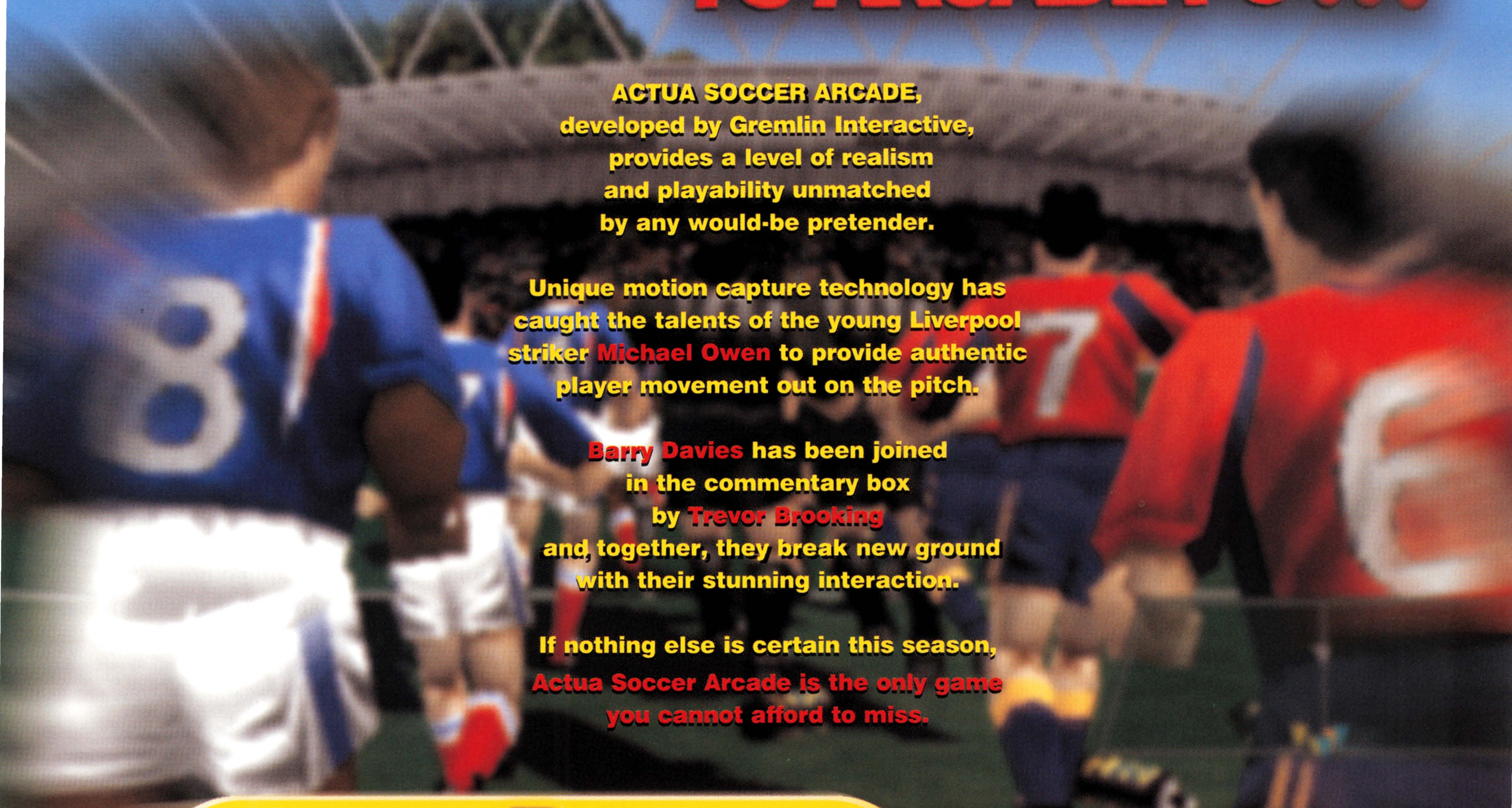

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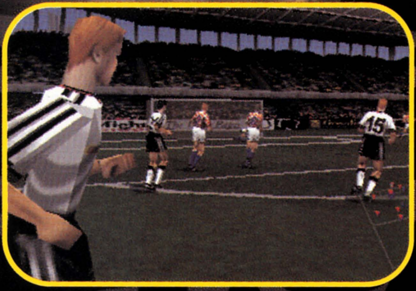

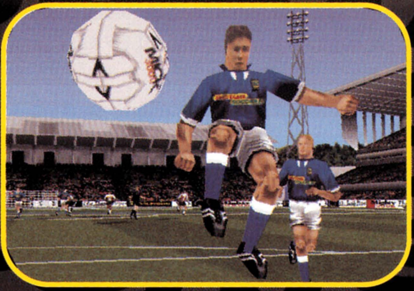

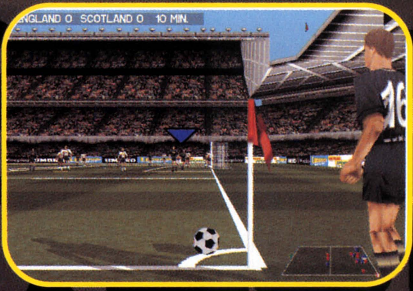

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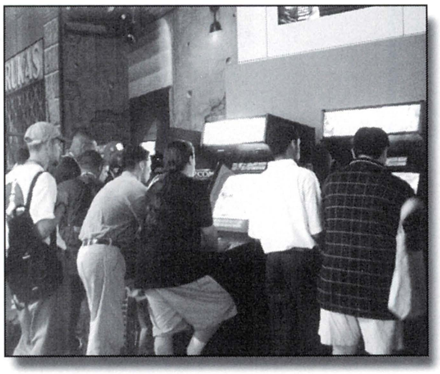
We asked two game players what they thought about rating games. "I don't have kids so I might not think it's as important as someone who has kids," said one. "I don't have kids either," his friend noted, "but I know I'm always wondering if I should be playing a certain game in front of my little nieces and nephews. I think there should be some kind of rating to help people know what is violent and what's not."

But both agreed that it should continue to be voluntary, as it is now. An ESRB representative said, "We're providing a valuable service to the industry. Parents feel comfortable letting their kids play games displaying our rating because they know it's not a game too advanced or violent for their children."

Game manufacturers have accepted the ratings as part of doing business. One told us this: "We are sensitive to the fact that some games are too intense for younger players. We know that if parents find their younger children playing games that are objectionable, they can simply cut them off from playing any games. However, if parents feel they have some control and can easily ascertain the type of game their children are playing, we all benefit."

Players enjoy *California Speed* in the Midway booth.

Players pushing the joysticks in the Capcom booth.



One pass through the massive show confirmed the fact that a rating system could be helpful. Games like *Turok, Seeds of Evil; Urban Assault; Vigilance; Cardinal Syn; Redjack, Revenge of the Brethren; Dawn of War; Command and Conquer; Blood 2; Akuji the Heartless; Duke Nukem: Time to Kill; Unholy War; Crime Killers; House of the Dead; Die by the Sword; Deathtrap Dungeon;* and *Bio Freaks* were examples showing that violence is not only accepted and tolerated among players; it's very popular. But one person told us that he was outraged that much of the media blitz covering the show focused too much on the violence. The show, he said, was not about violence, there was a lot more including games for children and women that should have been mentioned.

The game selections seem endless. The attendees, a cross section of everyone interested in computers, computer games, computer software, and home system games, consisted of game developers; Internet providers; those who program Web pages and update them; stores that sell home games and software; and a myriad of others who want to see what's new and what's next, which was appropriately adopted as E3's slogan. Retail store owners walked the floor trying to assess what will be popular in the next season and what they will be promoting in their stores.

Players on *Off Road Challenge* in the Midway booth.

Here are some, and we mean just some, of the hundreds of games available and in the process of being introduced for home systems. 3DO, a name that came knocking on coin-op's door a few years ago, publishes and distributes interactive entertainment software for personal computers, the Internet, and advanced entertainment systems such as the Sony PlayStation and Nintendo. It showed *Heroes III,* named as one of the best strategy games.

GT Interactive, a leading publisher of software under GT Interactive, Cavedog Entertainment, Single Trac, and Humongous Entertainment for personal computers and for video game systems from Nintendo, Sony, and Sega, showed among others, *Unreal,* a game one computer publication praised as "the best looking game of all time."

SegaSoft, a division of Sega Enterprises, develops and publishes content and technology for PC and Internet games. It showed *Vigilance,* where the action takes place in a recreated world in photo-realistic 3D in which the enemies are human scum.

Konami of America is entering a deal with Sony Computer Entertainment to market Konami Computer Entertainment's much talked about *Metal Gear Solid,* a tactical espionage action game. It's been generating a lot of attention and an advertising, marketing blitz is being planned for its October introduction.

Other games generating attention were *Starship Titanic,* a co-venture from Simon & Schuster Interactive and the Digital Village just in time to take advantage of the mega movie hit still in theaters; *NASCAR II,* an exceptionally good racing game from Sierra; *Rayman* from UBI Soft Entertainment, a leading developer, publisher, and distributor of interactive entertainment and educational software; Acclaim's *Turok 2,* a first person shooter sequel to last year's *Turok* which challenges player to stop the Primagem from escaping from prison; EA Sports'

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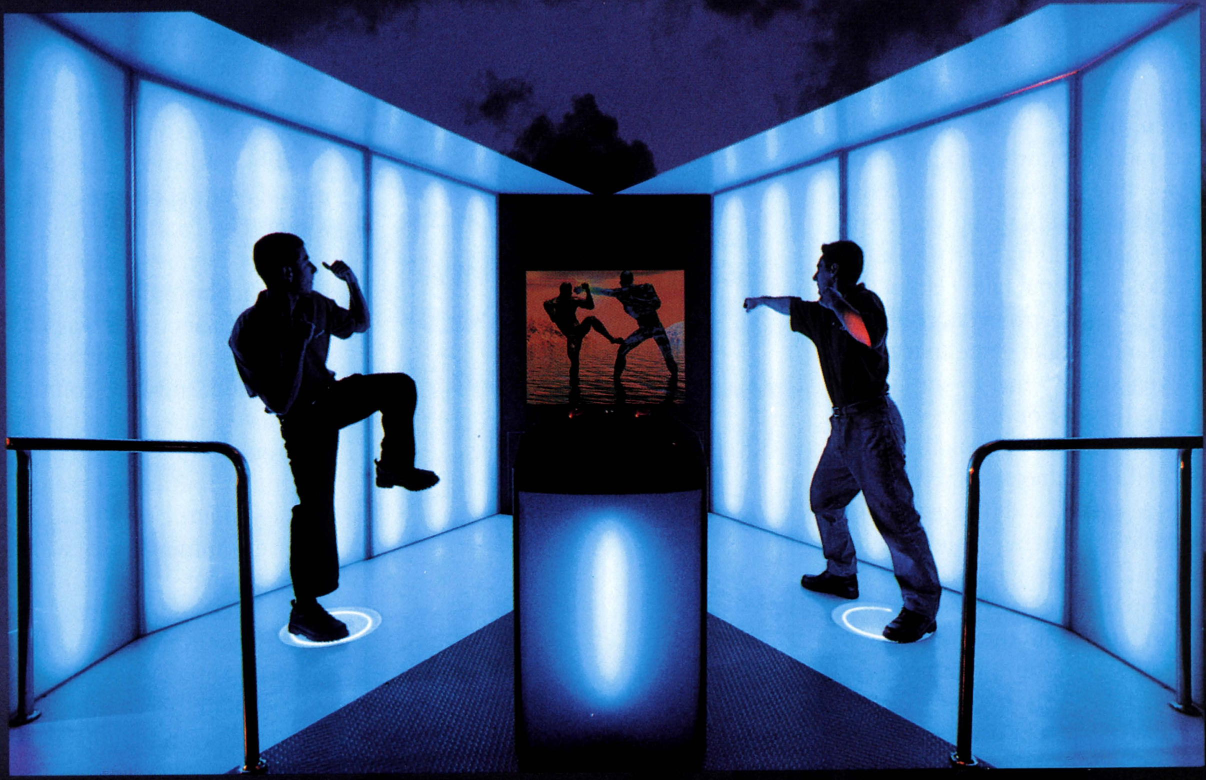

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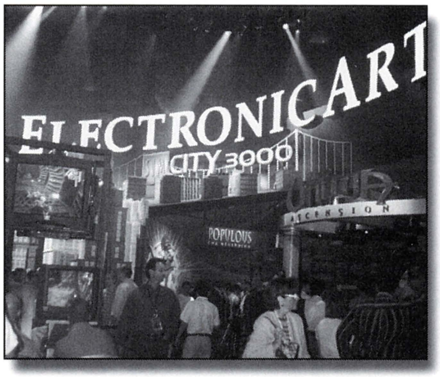
World Cup '98, delivering all the action of the World Cup tournament; *Tomb Raider III*, the first time a cyber personality (Lara Croft) is being considered to enter the mainstream with a possible movie; and Electronic Arts' *MotoRacer 2*, one of many driving games, this one with motorcycles that features enhanced graphics, customizable tracks, and multiplayer racing on 40 tracks (players can edit their own tracks with a 3D track editor) in five exotic locations.

In addition there were GT Interactive's *Trans Am Racing*, in which players race vintage '68 Camaros, '70 Boss Mustangs, and '70 Pontiac Firebirds and featuring actual drivers from 1968-1972 racing seasons; Midway's *Mortal Kombat 4*; *Cruis'n World* for Nintendo 64, billed as no-holds-barred car racing through six continents in this popular arcade game that comes home with new vehicles like vintage muscle cars, pick-up trucks, and 14 never-before-seen courses; and Microsoft's *Monster Truck Madness 2*, combining real trucks and new tracks.

With so many games to choose from, and a large percentage of those shown as prototypes, we figured it would be impossible to find more than one person singling out any one particular game, but we were wrong. One game seemed to show up on lists of the best home titles. It was even touted as the next *Quake*. Half Life by Valve Software and marketed by Sierra, is a first person shooting game (like *Quake*) and, of course, 3D. Eager players could not get their hands on the game to try it for themselves, so they had to settle for a tantalizing display on a screen in the Sierra booth. *Half Life* should be out at the end of the summer.

The Electronic Arts booth was like a small town!



Since we agreed with the gentleman who objected to having violent games singled out, sports games were extremely popular and there were lots of them. Exhibitors said they were popular with players. Some examples include *NCAA GameBreaker '99* for PlayStation; *Bottom of the 9th '99* and *International Superstar Soccer '98* by Konami; *Gameday* for PlayStation; *NBA Jam '99* and *NFL Quarterback Club '99* by Acclaim; *Hot Shots Golf* by Climax; and *VR Baseball '99* by Interplay. Many comments about hot games centered on sports and the general consensus is that there has never been better sports games to choose from. "Younger players tend to gravitate toward the slash 'em ups, but older guys can really get involved in the sports themed games," noted one attendee.

Another category of software prevalent at E3 was educational offerings. Called edutainment, these are titles of games and other software combines having fun with learning a thing or two. There were titles like *Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing* and *Kids Science* to *WHIZZ KIDZ* and *Land Before Time Math Adventure*. In addition to the games there were also a number of titles that didn't hide the fact that they were serious about education. Examples include *SAT/ACT, Multimedia Algebra,* and *The Home Teacher Series.*

Couldn't get to the E3 show? You didn't have to be there to experience it. You could find out the latest in the comfort of your own home through Imagine Media's live radio show called Imagine Radio over the Internet via its special tuner downloaded for free. It was estimated that about a half a million listeners would be tuning in.

Seminars

The E3 seminar program offered literally something for everyone. The keynote speakers were Brian Fargo, founder and CEO of Interplay Productions and an industry leader in the development of content-driven entertainment and educational software; Pete Higgins, group vice president of Microsoft's Interactive Media Group responsible for the company's online and interactive media business which includes MSNBC, the Microsoft Network, and multimedia games and CD-ROM titles; Kazuo Hirai, executive vice president and chief operating officer of Sony Computer Entertainment; Howard Lincoln, chairman of Nintendo, who is responsible for the overall management of the company; Sid Meier, chairman of creative development for Firaxis Games; and Lawrence Probst, chariman and chief executive officer of Electronic Arts, the world's leading independent interactive entertinament software company.

These gentleman addressed the latest trends from PC and console entertaintment to Internet issues and game development.

The seminar topics were arranged in seven tracks: "Strategic Business Opportunities and Trends;" "Technology Advances/Remain on the Cutting Edge;" "Game Developers Track;" "Entertainment on the Internet/Online Gaming;" "Retail and Distribution;" "Successful Marketing Strategies;" and "Financing New Media." Each of these tracks featured a selection of topics on the subject. ▲

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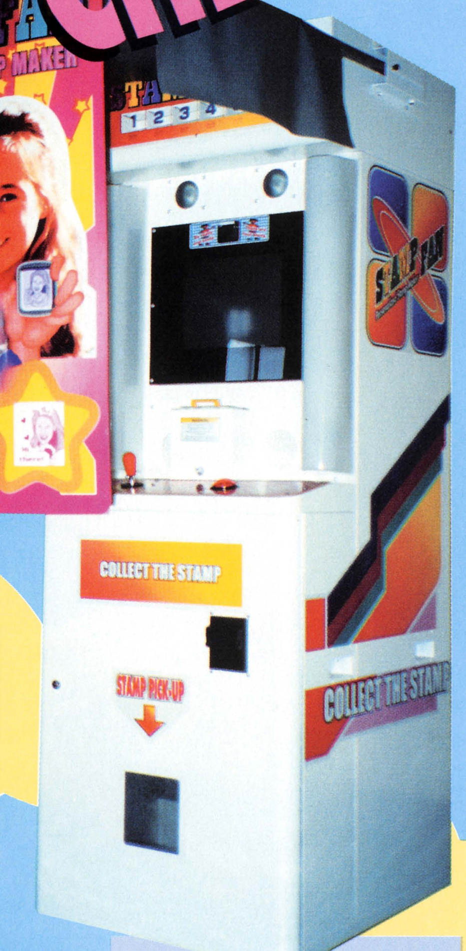
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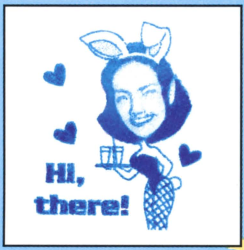

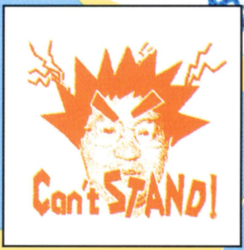

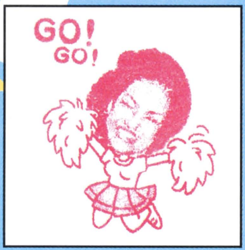

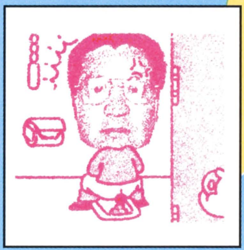

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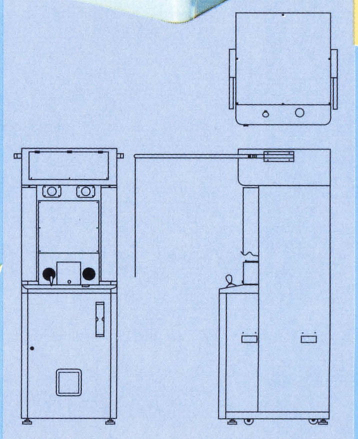

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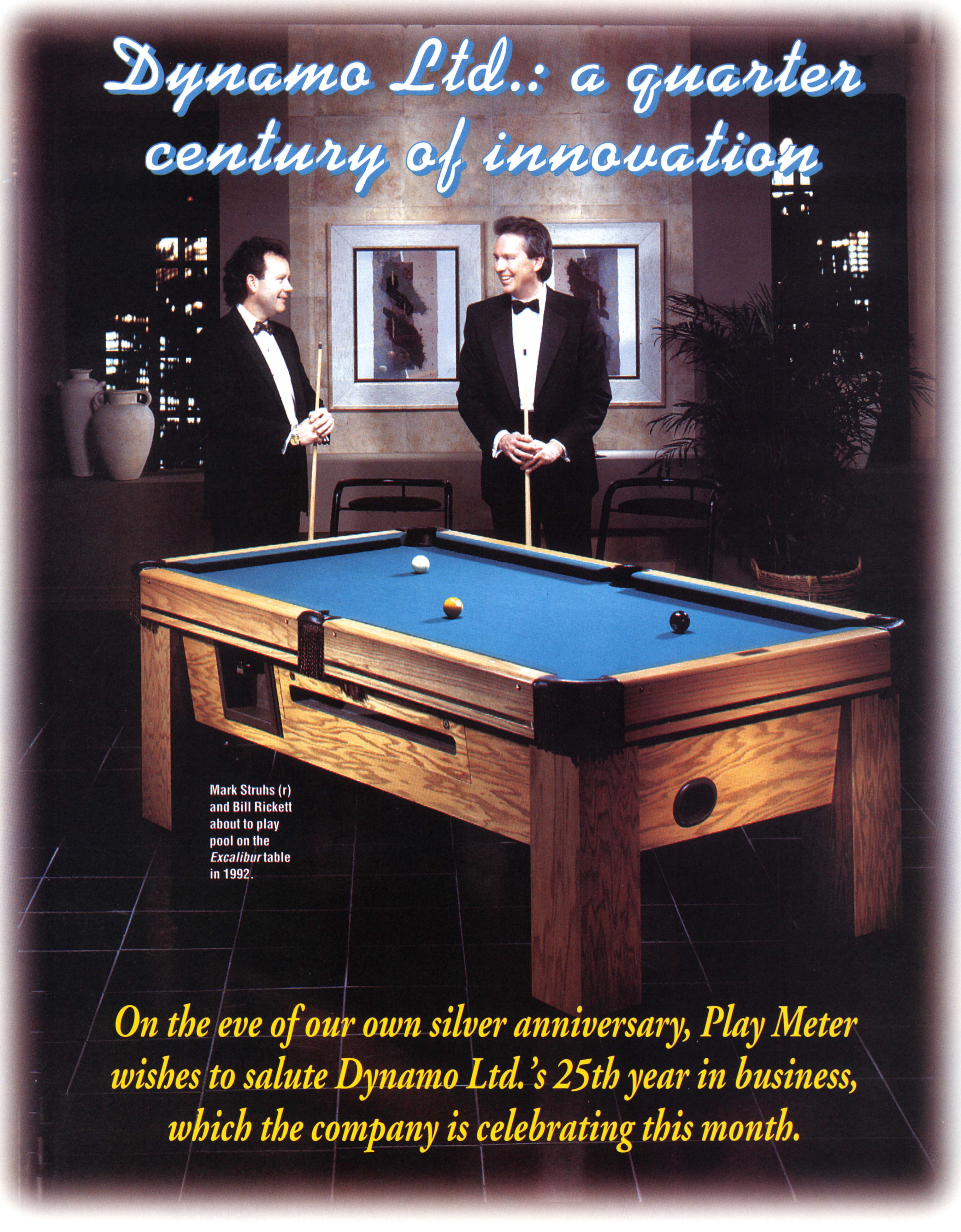
Dynamo Ltd.: a quarter century of innovation



Mark Struhs (r) and Bill Rickett about to play pool on the *Excalibur* table in 1992.

On the eve of our own silver anniversary, Play Meter wishes to salute Dynamo Ltd.'s 25th year in business, which the company is celebrating this month.

Play Meter **editor Valerie Cognevich joined Bill Rickett and the Dynamo crowd for the 10th anniversary celebration.**

Great Shootout

In the early '80s Bill Rickett demonstrates Dynamo pool table features.

On the company's 10th anniversary houseboat cruise aboard the Commodore, (l-r): Bill Rickett, Marsha Rickett, Mark Struhs, and John Lee.

An early staff photo, (l-r): Bill Rickett, Louise Main, Evelyn Silva, Mark Struhs, Brenda Furrh, H.L. Coats, and Butch Hopson.

From a garage business born from the motherhood of necessity to a state-of-the-art manufacturer of everything from quality table games to the newest in PC-based video titles, Dynamo's products have proven the test of time with operators both at home and abroad.

Company founder and president Bill Rickett has grown Dynamo from a two-person business, literally founded in his garage, to a multifaceted corporation based in Richland Hills, Texas, that employs hundreds, utilizes more than 150,000 square feet of manufacturing space, and boasts annual sales in excess of $25 million.

"I was operating soccer tables and the ones available just weren't that good," Bill recounted in a 1991 *Play Meter* interview, describing the company's beginnings. "I built the first one in my garage and soon others wanted to buy them."

From that point Dynamo evolved into manufacturing pool tables in 1977 and later air hockey and shuffleboard tables. The shuffleboard product is now available from Champion Shuffleboard.

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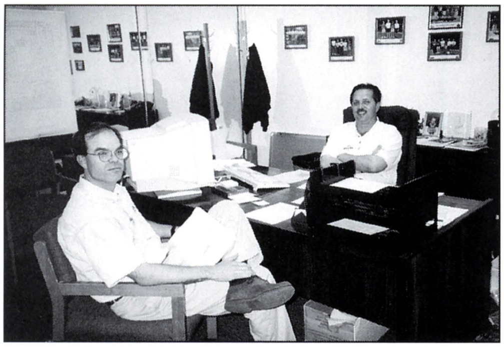
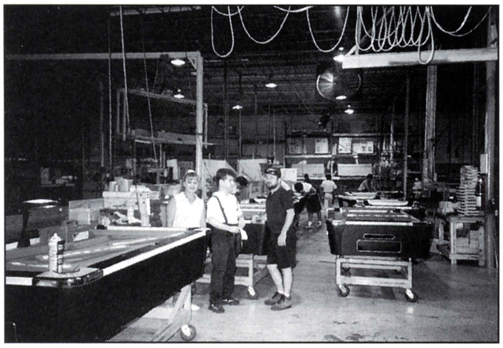
Dynamo sales and support staff: front row, (l-r): Chris Brady, Julie King, and Angelique Strittmater; back row, (l-r): Mick White, Damon Paramore, and Mike Prendergrast.



Left, controller Bill Goodman; right, vice president of operations Ray Reuter.



A look inside the factory.

Dynamo Ltd. headquarters

Dynamo broke new ground with its popular PC-based *Solitaire Challenge*, introduced in 1994, and the subsequent *Tournament Solitaire*—games that have universal appeal and helped bring more women players into locations.

The company has been honored by several groups for excellence in exporting. Last year it launched subsidiaries to capitalize on further opportunities in the gaming industry as well as recent developments in PC technology and the promise they hold for innovative game content.

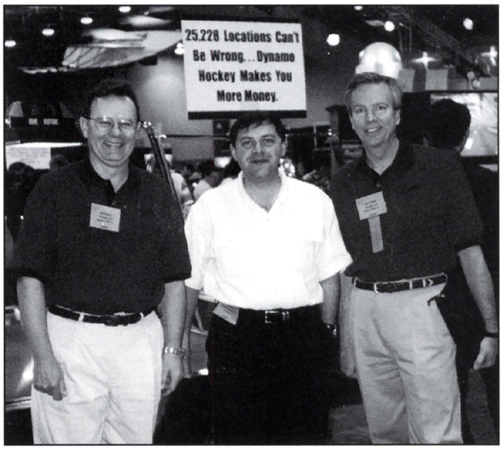
However, success has never clouded Dynamo's vision, and its founder has never lost sight of the operators' needs or his appreciation for their business savvy. "Operators are very good buyers," Bill told *Play Meter* in 1986, the first time they graced our cover. "They know how to put a pencil to the earnings and know what price they can afford to pay. Sometimes there will be a kit that has extremely good earnings, and the operator gets a bargain."

Bargains are something Bill and the rest of the gang at Dynamo should be well acquainted with, having provided operators with universal cabinets—a market the company revolutionized—and games manufactured on contract for industry stalwarts like Bally, Betson, Data East, Namco, and Sega since 1982.

Chris Brady, vice president of sales and marketing, credits Dynamo's long-term success to the integrity of the products: "We're committed to quality. Our place in the industry didn't happen overnight."

Assisting Chris in the sales depart-

From left: Damon Paramore, Lenore Fromm of Randy Fromm's Arcade School, Dennis Sable of GreyStone, and Julie King at AMOA '96.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At ASI 97 by the *Top Brass* table, (l-r): Bill Rickett, Valentin Ell of Eastern European Co., and Mark Struhs.

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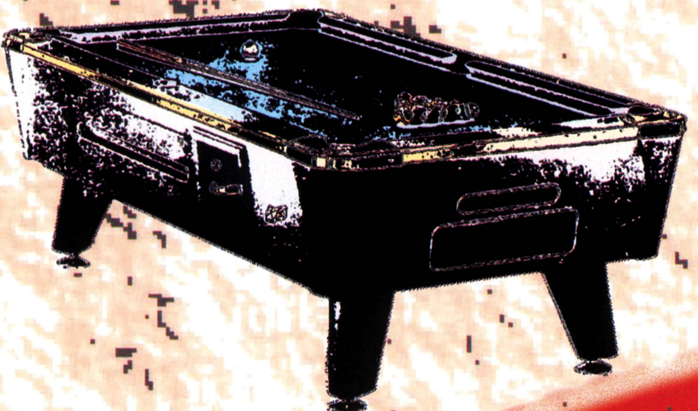

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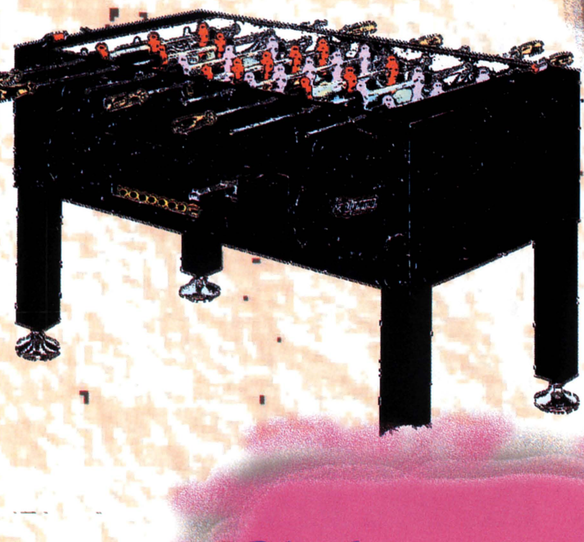

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PLAY METER Magazine

FOR THE COIN-OP/FEC INDUSTRY

ment are well-known industry figures Damon Paramore and Mick White. Julie King handles export sales. Other support staff includes Angelique Strittmater and Mike Prendergrast. The company's vice president of operations is Ray Reuter; the controller is Bill Goodman.

Brady explained that the company's *Top Brass* pool table, introduced in 1995, "helped get pool tables into more upscale locations, and helped operators get $1 play." In addition, Dynamo's air hockey table has been a consistent award-winner for eight years!

At this year's Amusement Showcase International (ASI) in Las Vegas the company exhibited its innovative *Blacklight Pool* table featuring custom trim and cloth and glowing balls; the all-new *Dynamo Soccer* with a black-marble cabinet and host of operator-friendly features; and the *Hot Flash II* air hockey table with a glowing playfield and the DynaBlast blower system. The company also showed off its current line of universal cabinets, which is being joined by a new member of the family designed for PC-based platform games.

Its newly formed subsidiary Dynamo Interactive is being headed up by Mark Struhs as president. At ASI, the company presented the *NetZone* public Internet kiosk, a pay-for-use computer terminal with all the Internet functions of a home machine and more; the *Tidel ATM*, for which Dynamo Interactive acts as both distributor and surcharge and interchange fee collector; and XS-G, a new PC-based simulator-style video game being produced in conjunction with the virtual reality firm GreyStone Technology.

Dynamo strengthened its position in video gaming two years ago by opening an operation located in Billings, Mt., called Summit Amusement and Distributing, to handle distribution and service for all the company's products in that market.

Continuing its aggressive product development strategy, Dynamo introduced its state-of-the-art *Royal Touch* video gaming terminal at the '97 World Gaming Congress. The game features a PC-based hardware and software system that results in higher resolution graphics and animation capabilities through a 19-inch VGA monitor.

During a seminar addressing new technology at ASI, Mark laid out Dynamo Interactive's goal for the future: to serve as a gateway to coin-op and gaming markets for companies with top-notch video game content and to support efforts to standardize the PC platform. "We are also going to work with our own competitors," he declared. "We'll create the pie and then compete for pieces."

Mark has played a vital role in the success and expansion of Dynamo during his years in the industry and is regarded as one of the amusement industry's top authorities on exporting. The U.S. Small Business Administration named him Exporter of the Year in 1996, and under his direction Dynamo was also awarded the prestigious President's E Award for excellence in exporting in 1994.

Combined, these achievements demonstrate the best our industry has to offer—one of our own following a vision and making it a better industry for us all. To Bill, Mark, Chris, Damon, Mick, and all our friends at Dynamo, we congratulate you on 25 years of excellence and wish you 25 more. ▲

……

In tune with Bill Rickett

Not many company executives are as accessible and down to earth as Bill Rickett of Dynamo Ltd. Truly a hands-on owner, he is happiest when he is on the production line. We asked Bill to recall some highlights of the last 25 years, and give us an inkling of what it takes to make a mark in the coin-op world.

Looking back on it, the thing I value the most is all the great friends I've made. The people I deal with don't just become customers and competitors and suppliers; they become friends. This is a small industry and we all know each other. I'm proud of the fact that I got through 25 years without making a lot of enemies, and I'm proud to be associated with the coin-op business.

There are some things we have pioneered. For instance, we basically invented the system cabinet business. We were one of the first to bring in kits and convince the Japanese companies to sell them so operators could use up their existing cabinets. We were set up to sell kits through an affiliated company, Tago. Once the concept was proven, it really took off.

Then the opposite thing happened. Most of the factories sold kits; they became very hot. Everyone went through a kit syndrome. Then we realized we needed a hardware system because, as

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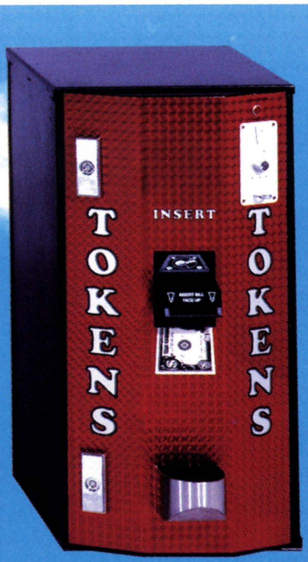
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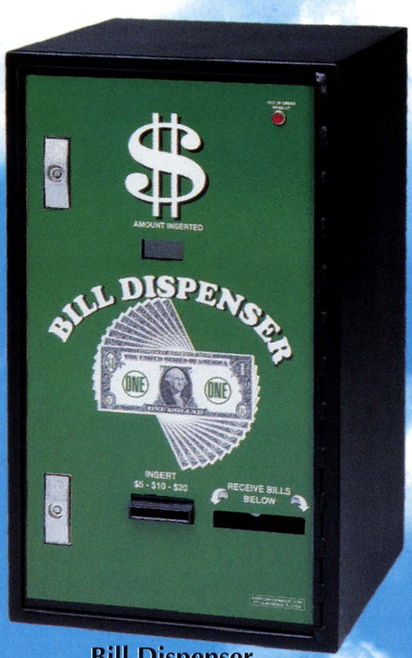
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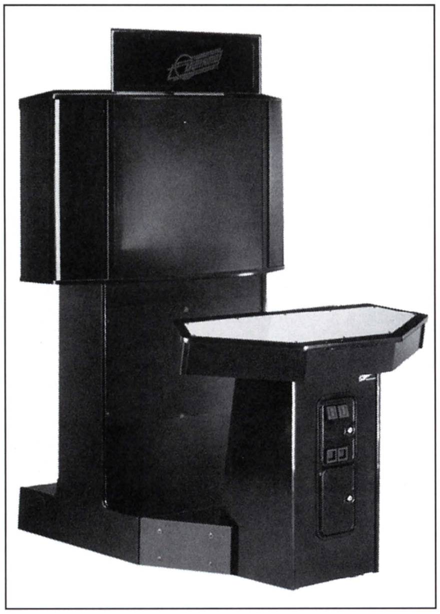
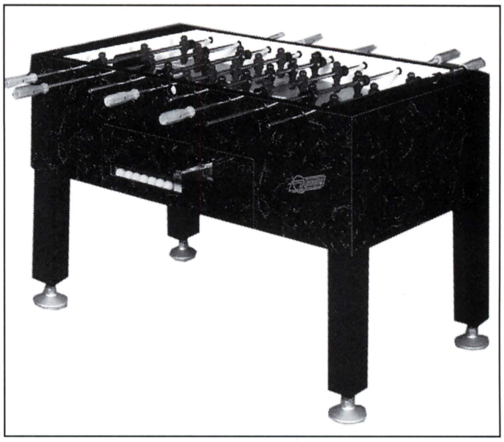

HS-15 cabinet


Dynamo Soccer

the old wood was being depleted, operators needed an easy way to change their cabinets from kit to kit. Before the JAMMA harness, we developed an interface board that enabled an operator to easily plug any kit PC board into our system cabinet wire harness.

In the meantime we went to the Japanese and said we would really like to see them develop a common pin-out so all kits would fit the same connector and operators would not have to rewire each time they had a new kit. That's where the JAMMA standard came from; it was introduced first on our HS-5 system cabinet.

We brought the air hockey game back from the dead. We feel like that's an achievement because it provides a great return for the operator. Now air hockey is a coin-op earner because it is being made by a coin-op company that knows how to produce games that last for the coin market.

A lot of innovations have taken place in our pool table line including the black and brass *Top Brass* table and the neon *Blacklight* table. We followed our basic goal: to provide good, solid, long-term products that give operators a great return on their money. We offer something operators can buy and have on location for years and make a healthy profit. We try to stick with those kinds of products. We realize there are other opportunities to make a quick buck but we don't feel that's good for operators.

We also pioneered contract manufacturing after the major Japanese video game manufacturers closed their U.S. plants in 1982. We said, "Let us build games here for you and you won't have the overhead." That caught on real well. We built video games for every major Japanese manufacturer, a total of over 250,000 games.

The "Microsoft initiative" as it's referred to today is something we did about five years ago with the first successful, large-scale distributed PC-based video game, our *Solitaire Challenge.* As everyone knows, that game is still out there on industry charts. It fits our criteria: to build a product that makes money for the operator for a long period of time. We're pleased that we've come up with a few ideas that worked.

We think the business is moving toward consolidation, moving toward operators who are really pros and smart buyers. In the future you had better be good as a factory if you want to sell to operators because they know what they're doing. You have to build your products well. They are building big businesses and big businesses have to be based on stable earnings. We try to provide operators with that stability.

When I was president of AAMA I established the Foreign Business Development Program, and I'm pretty proud of that. It's been very successful for the association and for the industry. Most exposure to coin-op equipment in foreign countries is through the arcade concept. What we would like to do is show them the street side with our products, that there is a long-term business they can create. We see a lot of opportunity to export our industry to other countries.

It's good for the operators when we develop new business in other countries because it gives us a chance to increase our volume and lower our costs. Plus, there's the exchange of ideas. New markets and new ways are healthy.

In the future we're looking to continue with our PC-based experience and work with Dynamo Interactive to develop PC-based games. We have some revolutionary ideas in mind. Our target date is to have new and different product ready in time for AMOA Expo in September.

We could not have made it for 25 years without the support of operators and our distributors. We try to listen to them and do what they tell us. Sometimes when we mess up, it turns out that we didn't listen very well. It's not always possible to do exactly what they want, but they don't hesitate telling you. Listening has been the cornerstone of our success. Since we don't operate, we have to listen to the operator who does, or we won't know about the operating problems.

We are very thankful to our friends for giving us the opportunity to hang around this long. Because of them we have been able to be successful. We appreciate that opportunity and hope we continue to earn it. ▲

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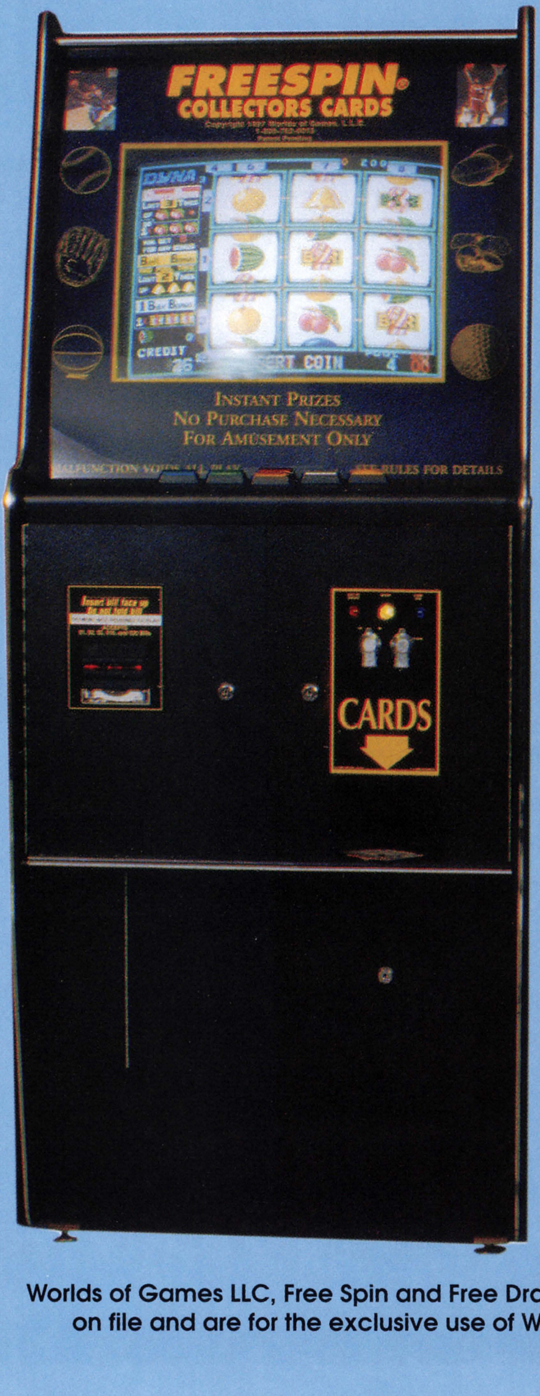
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KIDDIE'S MFG. A Fun Factory For Children

Kiddie's Mfg. is going back to the fundamentals. It's refocusing and is 100 percent committed to servicing its customers with innovative and quality products. The industry has already seen the results of its efforts, restructuring, and commitment to the kiddie ride industry.

As a youngster, Eric Torres—founder, president, and chief executive officer of Kiddie's Mfg. would sit next to his father and mentor Mario Torres on an airboat traveling to service bulk vending and kiddie rides. Mario had an extensive route in Puerto Rico, St. Thomas, and St. Croix. But young Eric wasn't convinced that he would one day follow in his father's footsteps, but the seeds were planted in those early days. Of course, back then Eric was probably way more impressed with the airboat than the equipment they were going to service! "That airboat was quite an experience," he said. .

Eric recounts that the kiddie rides in those early days were usually ponies or horses and it cost 10 cents to ride. The real force in the kiddie ride industry during the '60s and '70s was imports primarily from Europe. Because the selection and quality of these imported rides wasn't

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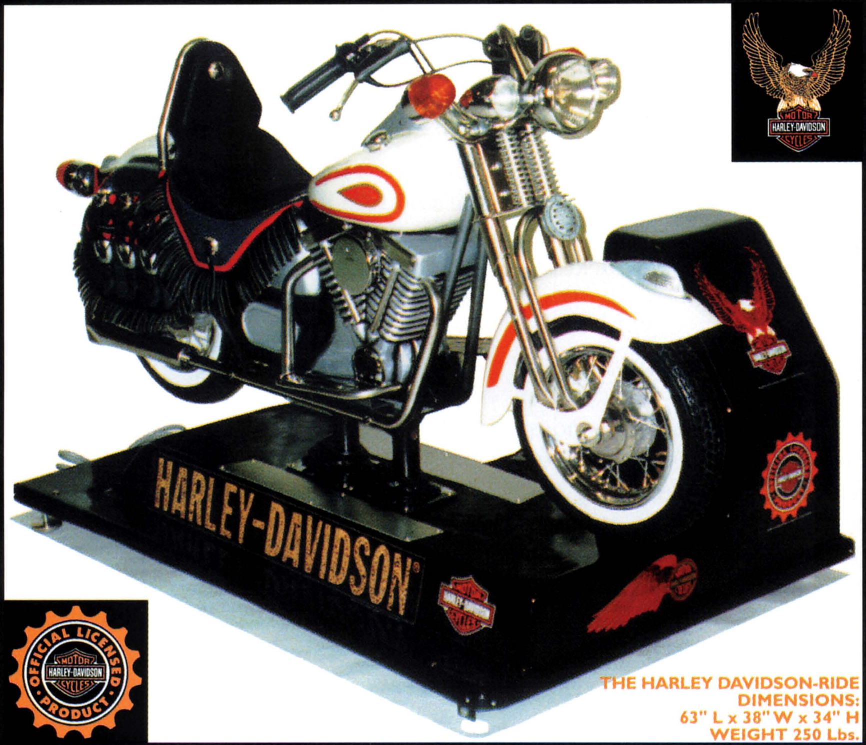
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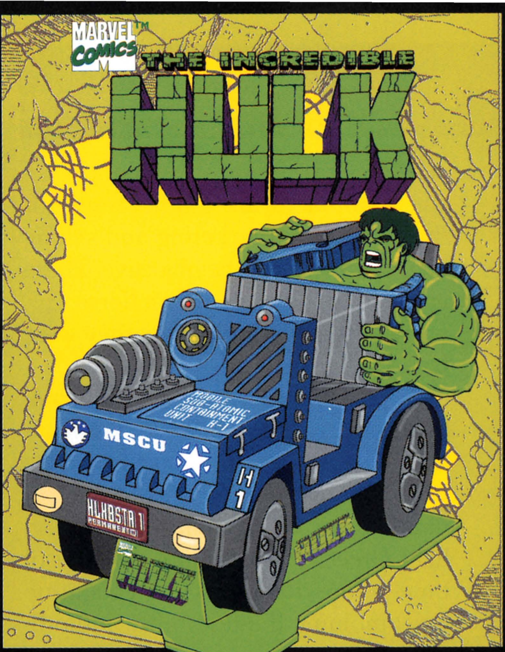
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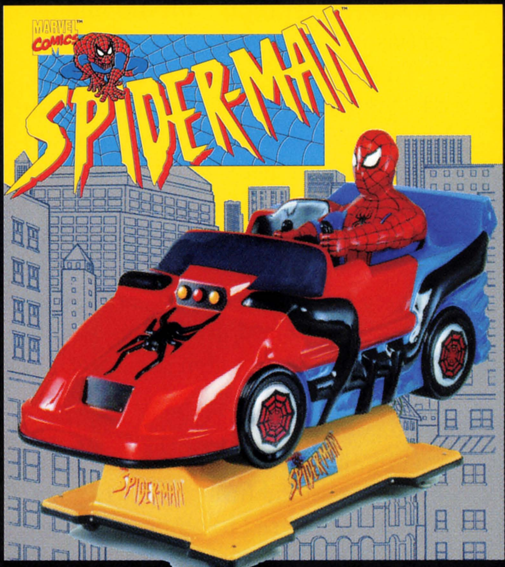
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very good, some local companies began manufacturing kiddie rides for their own use; marketing and selling their rides was not the objective. These were simple rides, usually a horse, car, or train, but Eric recalls that they were built like tanks.

Eric noted that Carousel International in Missouri was a pioneer manufacturer of these in-house rides. He added that since imports had one advantage by introducing music and light effects, it was simply a matter of time before domestic rides caught up by combining the durability and other domestic design features required for street operation with the imported flash.

The kiddie ride industry in the United States evolved from the in-house/barn mom & pop operations to state-of-the-art factories. There are few of these small shop manufacturers anymore because of the market's need for consistent quality, product liability insurance, UL certification, creativity, and innovation. Mom & pops simply cannot fulfill these tough demands and according to Eric, will soon be eliminated completely. He added that there are not that many well established kiddie ride manufacturers, a fairly small number compared to other industries. In addition to Kiddie's Mfg. and Carousel he lists less than 10 both in the United States and overseas.

Eric didn't join the family business right out of college. Instead, armed with a degree in marketing, he joined copier giant XEROX where he stayed four years. His superior sales and marketing performance earned him a promotion to sales management at the tender age of 23.

By 1978 the lure of the family business was too strong to resist. He reluctantly resigned from XEROX and took over the family business. In 1980 he began to concentrate his efforts on the kiddie ride segment of the business, creating a separate corporation and building a 500-strong kiddie ride route within two years.

He found tremendous success in his kiddie ride route, but he was becoming more and more dissatisfied with the equipment on hand. Eric's idea of manufacturing rides that were more reliable and offered more selection than what was available from others became reality in 1982. The rest, so they say, is history. Kiddie's Mfg. has grown to include corporate offices and its principal factory in Lares, Puerto Rico, a secondary manufacturing facility in High Springs, Fla., and a marketing and sales office in Chicago, Ill.

On a personal note, in 1985 Eric was awarded the Small Business Person of the Year Award for Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands by president Ronald Reagan at the White House. He also represented the governor of Puerto Rico at the White House Conference on Small Business in 1986.

CREATIVE DESIGNS

Eric said that Kiddie's is well-known in the industry for its creative designs and manufacturing capabilities that enable the company to create a concept and then convert it into a finished top quality product. There's plenty of proof in his claims like the Wal-Mart coin-operated kiddie ride truck; the Toys R Us kiddie ride truck, *Wave Runner*, and 16-horse *Kids World Carousel*; The Flintstones series that includes the *Flintmobile*, *Dino*, and the *Logging Continental*; The Jetsons rides; the Tom & Jerry *Cheesemobile*; the *Batman Forever Batmobile*; and many other licensed and traditional top money making kiddie rides.

Kiddie's has continued to obtain new licenses. The *Spiderider* kiddie ride, featuring a favorite Marvel hero, Spiderman, has surpassed even the most optimistic expectations. Eric boasted, "Needless to say, it's become a major success where it counts as a major coin drop generator for the operator." It was named Best New Kiddie Ride Product in 1997 by the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions.

Following that success, Kiddie's introduced *The Incredible Hulk*, also an award winner at IAAPA as Honorable Mention for Best New Kiddie Ride. *X-Men*, introduced late last year, is also generating excellent sales results, according to Kiddie's.

> ***"The kiddie ride industry in the United States evolved from the in-house/barn mom & pop operations to state-of-the-art factories."***

RESTRUCTURING

The company, a kiddie ride pioneer with designs and volume manufacturing, ran into a snag with its marketing and sales that had been delegated to a third party. It resulted in limiting Kiddie's bottom line profitability and it's trade name/trademark recognition.

Plans for serious change began in February 1997. Kiddie's completely took over responsibility for marketing and selling it's products. The company is proud to say that Kiddie's now finds itself in an even stronger position with improved management, better addressed quality issues, and it has initiated a major restructuring.

Eric said that since Kiddie's will be selling its product direct as well as through other industry channels on a non-exclusive basis, it's guaranteed that there will be an increase in sales of well over 30 percent. Additionally, customers will readily associate Kiddie's products with the quality the company holds as vital to its success.

Kiddie's customers have been assured of Kiddie's commitment to the industry. "Existing new products tied into new products under development will carry the company into the next century," said Eric, "with the commanding creative leadership characteristic of Kiddie's. Proof of this commitment is illustrated by the signing of major top world wide brands."

Examples of what Kiddie's license agreements will bring to the kiddie

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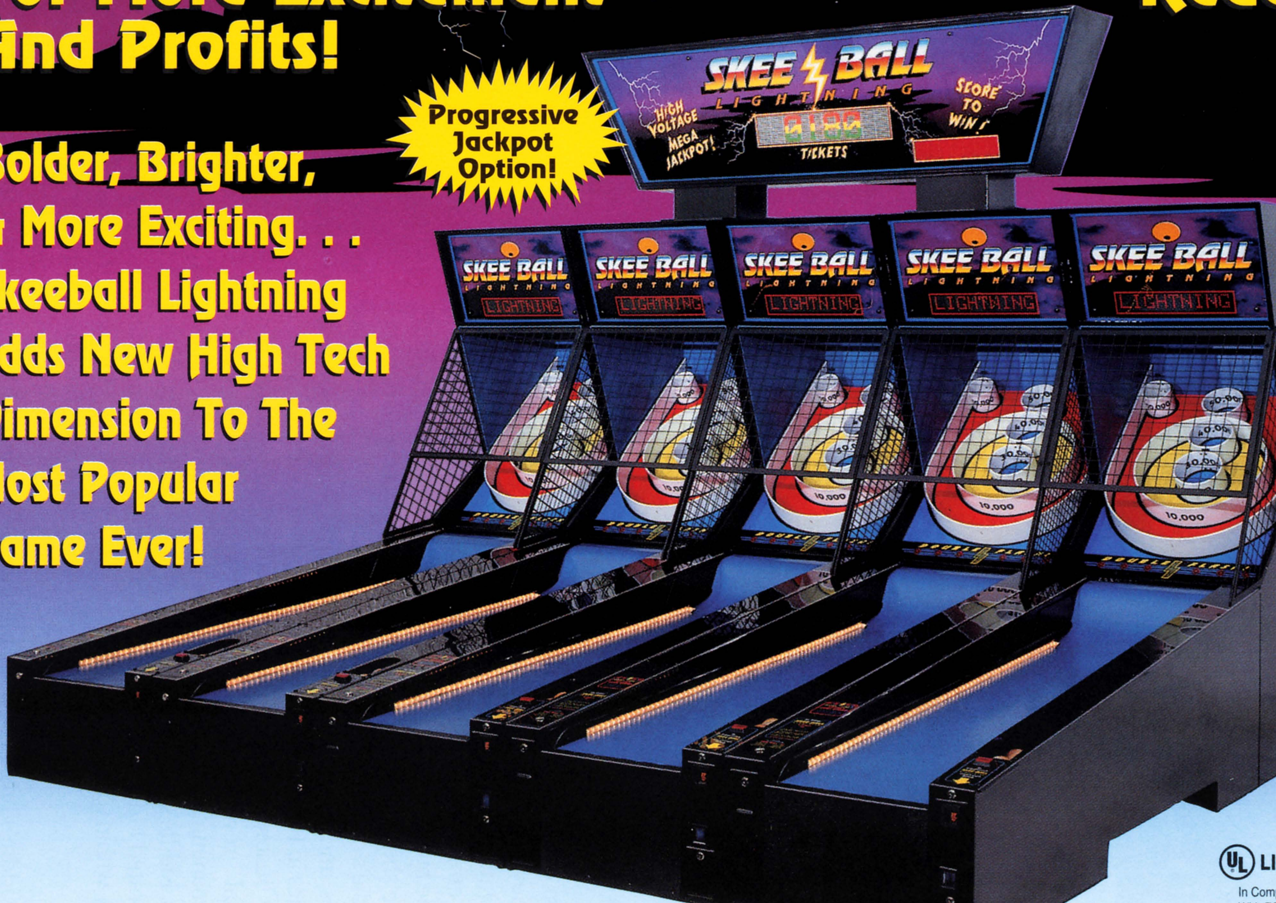

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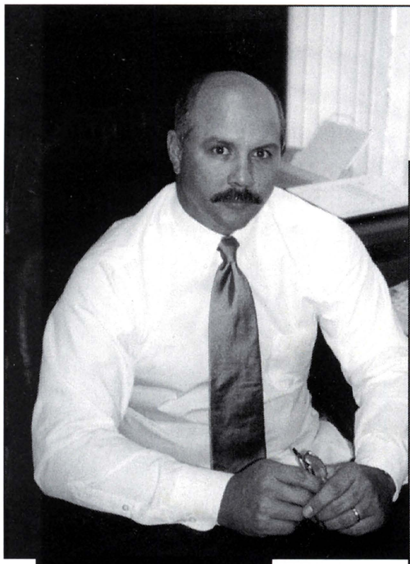
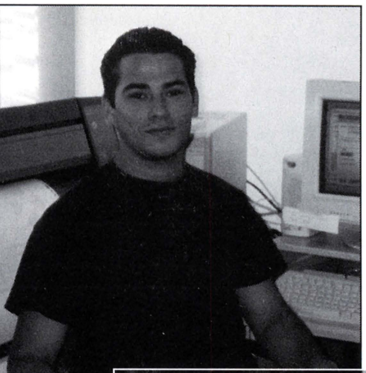
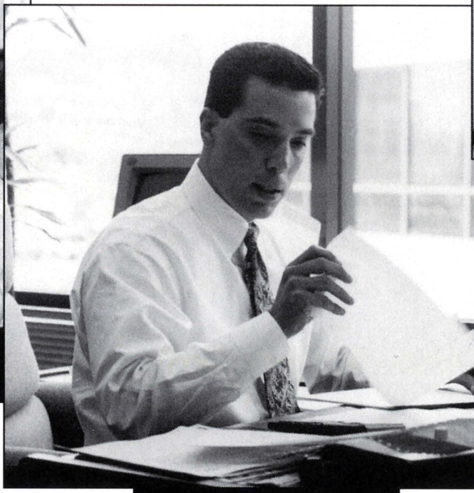


Eric Torres



Graphic art director Jossue Soto



Doug Shipley

Finance director Awilda Torres

ride industry include Loony Tunes characters like Bugs Bunny, Lola Bunny, Sylvester and Tweety, Road Runner, Wylie Coyote, Tazmanian Devil, Daffy Duck, Porky Pig, Marvin the Martian with K9, and others. Introduction of this unique line of interactive kiddie rides is scheduled for August.

In addition, Kiddie's has signed license agreements with the NFL for a line of NFL helmet rides; Mattel, a one of a kind business opportunity with Hot Wheels cars; the NBA, select the team of preference for your ride; and Harley-Davidson.

During the past two years Kiddie's has embarked on a new source of income by operating its products on a revenue share basis in major retail chains. Kiddie's operates more than 300 kidde rides and other related vending machines in Puerto Rico. This complementary business not only generates additional revenue but serves as a permanent laboratory to field test products. Kiddie's expects to expand its coin-operated kiddie ride division dramatically within the next three years.

STAFF

Kiddie's has about 80 full-time associates and Eric said he considers the company's relationship with them to be excellent. He estimates that the staff will grow by about 25 to 50 more in the next few months because of increased demand for product.

A year ago, Kiddie's made one of its most successful investments in top management resources with the addition of Doug Shipley. He was former director of marketing and sales for Mattel and a respected top executive in the coin machine industry with 19 years of experience at companies like Sega.

Doug, vice president of marketing and sales, will direct Kiddie's marketing and sales efforts worldwide. In addition, he will contribute through his contacts and knowledge of the industry in obtaining new brands that will further solidify Kiddie's as a kiddie ride leader.

The company has also added John Druga, principal owner of J&J Precision, a well known and respected manufacturer of kiddie rides and vending machines. He has chalked up over 15 years of experience in the industry making him the perfect choice as Kiddie's vice president of manufacturing. John will direct both manufacturing facilities, bringing applied mechanical engineering knowledge to the Kiddie's product line as well as the technological innovation to launch Kiddie's into the next century.

Awilda Torres is vice president of finance and human resources, who Eric calls "a key to Kiddie's success." Eric added, "Awilda has selected and trained our administrative staff making it a synchronized team of dedicated associates willing to dedicate their time and energy to service our most valued asset—the customer."

THE FUTURE

Eric shared these observations on the industry and how kiddie rides play an important role in that industry.

"The vending industry is a segment of the games and entertainment industry. Coin-operated kiddie rides effectively combine the characteristics of vending with entertainment geared toward children," Eric began.

"The industry consists of distributors who sell vending equipment to operators, companies and individuals who operate the equipment in arcades, or independent operators who operate the equipment in various locations."

He continued, "Kiddie rides are an important segment of an operator's business since the rides enhance the family image. Rides also generate a substantial amount of revenue.

"A key factor to success in the industry is the location. The price of riding is 25 cents to 50 cents but 50

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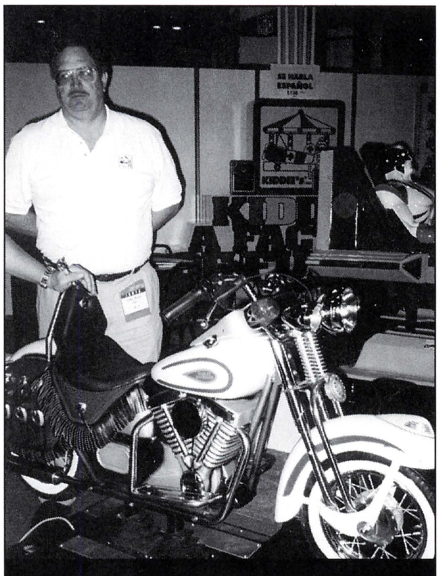
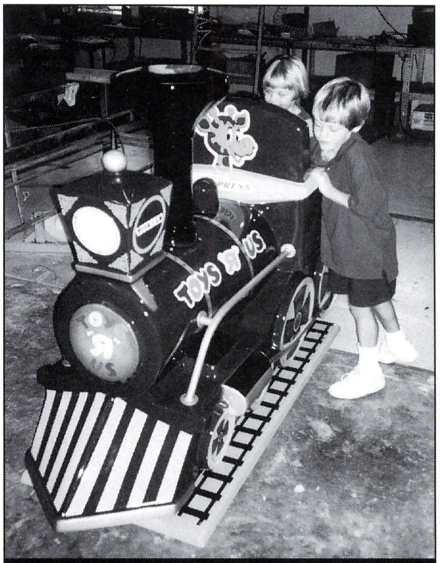
On the future of Kiddie's, Eric had this to say: "Being part of an emerging industry hasn't been easy", Eric tells us. "We have had to struggle to overcome many obstacles, but the key is that we have overcome them. We still remember comments like 'who would want to ride a shoe? when we introduced a private label ride called *Toddler University Shoe Ride.* To say the least, the *Shoe* as well as our Wal-Mart truck kiddie rides have given us the inside locations. For the first time kiddie rides were real business. This gave way to Toys R Us private label rides and helped land the first quantum leap in kiddie rides when we introduced the first ride with a major impact—*The Flintmobile.*"

He continued, "What is ahead is something to stop and think about. There is plenty of room for innovation through applied technology. The future brings opportunity. Our new rides will transform education into interactive experiences for children presented in a format recognizable by both parents and children.

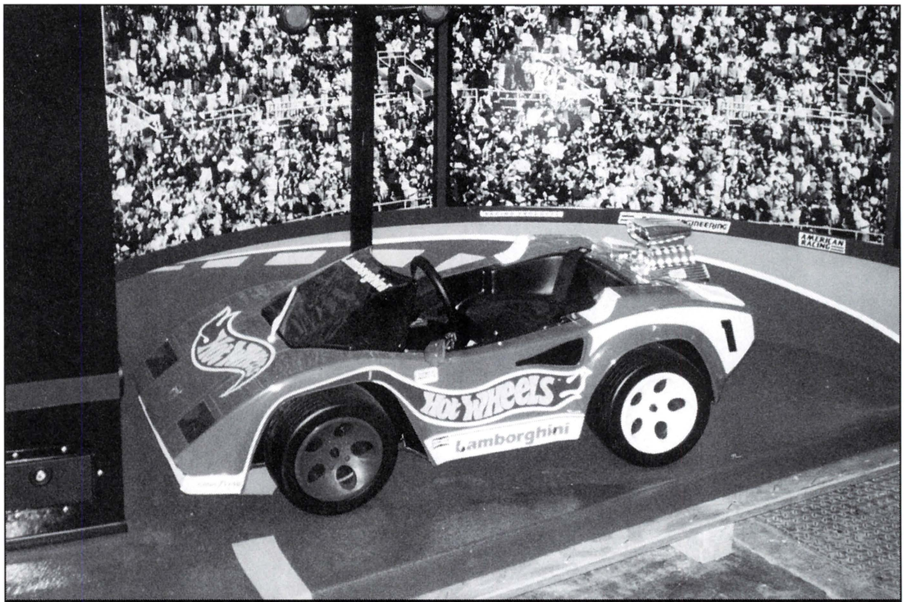
"This is the key element when it comes to licensing intellectual properties. It is also of the utmost importance that we preserve the design features that separate our emerging segment from the rest of the coin-op industry. Last, but actually first, are primary elements to look for when designing and manufacturing kiddie rides: sales price, quality, ease of operation, and coin drop generating potential. Operator's ROI is key. We understand that our continued success depends on our ability to satisfy operators, location owners, parents, and children. This is our promise as well as our challenge into the 21st century." ▲



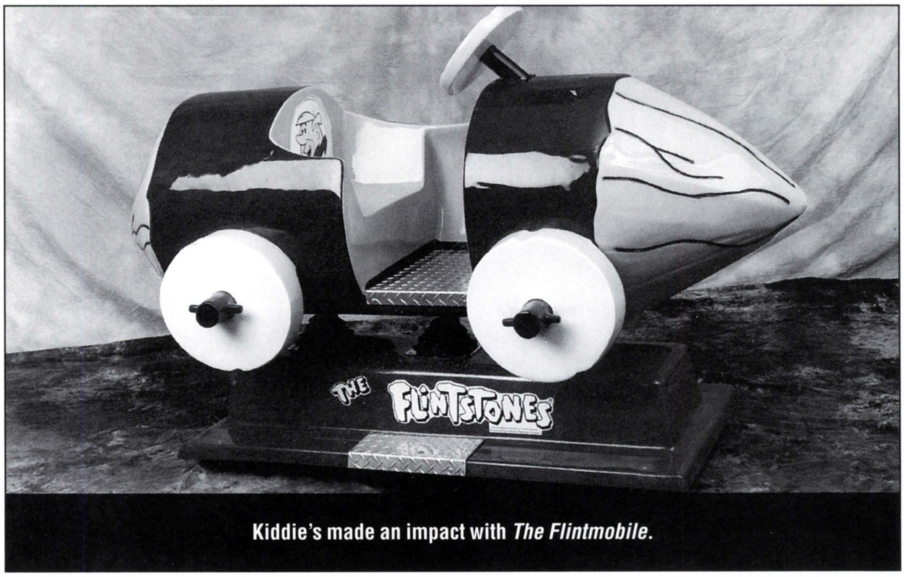
John Druga with Kiddie's licensed *Harley-Davidson* ride.



Kiddie's *Toys R Us Train*



The popular Hot Wheels car is now a ride from Kiddie's.



Kiddie's made an impact with *The Flintmobile.*

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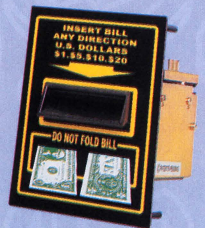
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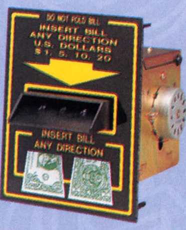
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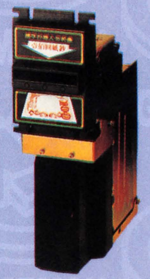

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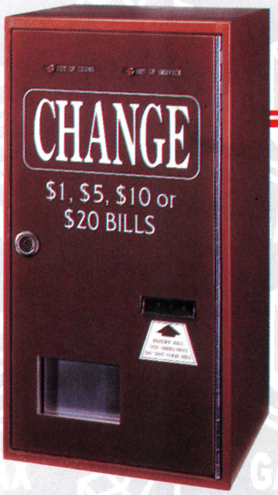
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For Kids Only

It's no puzzling matter. Put the pieces together and stand back to see the big picture. A never-ending stream of game-playing customers is coming along each year. Are you missing the opportunity to capture their interest with suitable coin-op entertainment?

* * *

Long before these customers of tomorrow are able to reach the controllers of the high risk/high return games, they start out small on kiddie rides, capsule vendors, gumball machines, and child-size games. Children account for an exploding birthday party business that brings them into locations and creates the desire to return.

* * *

This special section looks at those diminutive customers and the types of amusement activities that appeal to them.

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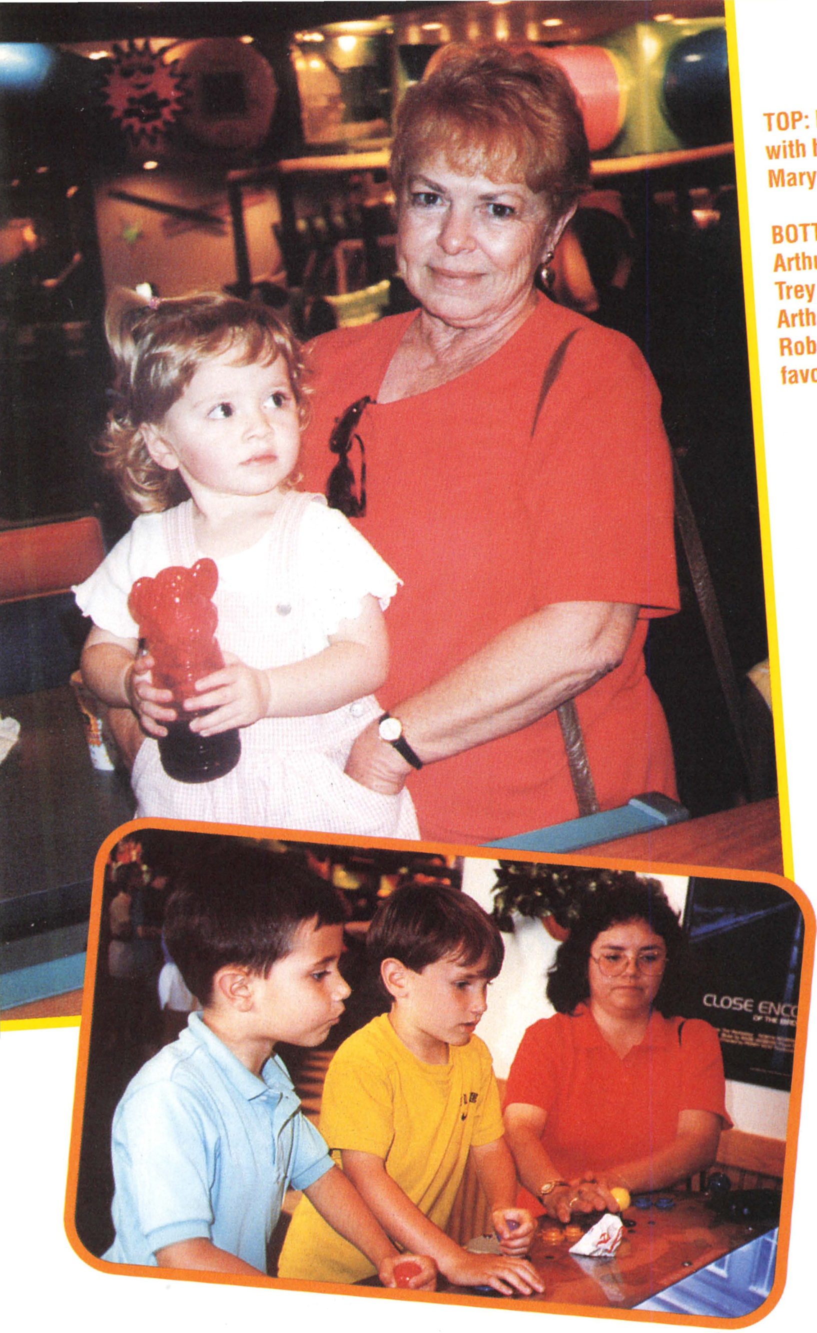


TOP: Madison Casey, 2, with her grandmother Mary Seemann.

BOTTOM: From left: Arthur Robertson, 6; Trey Weeks, 6; and Arthur's mom Merly Robertson play an old favorite, TMNT.

KIDS (and parents) SAY THE smartest things

As adults, we are fairly certain we have a good idea about what children want when we plan for their entertainment. To confirm that opinion, we visited one of the favorite places designed and developed with kids in mind.

When you open the door at Chuck E. Cheese's, you know something's different. You are greeted by a friendly face and if you have children with you the hand stamp comes out and both your hand and that of the children are stamped. The gracious host explains that no child leaves with anyone other than the matching stamped hand.

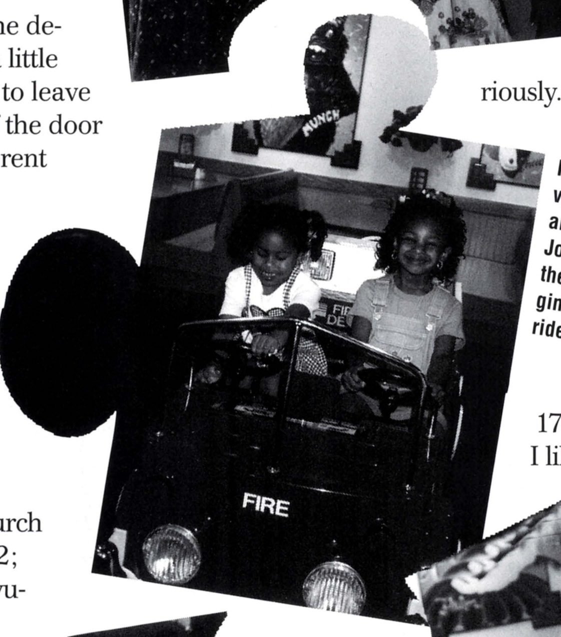
And this is just one feature that makes Chuck E. Cheese's the destination of choice for many with younger children. Just ask Laurie Woodard, the mother of very active (maybe we need another "very" in that description!) Thomas, who is two. "What I like about this location is that no child leaves without matching the stamp on their hand to that of a parent or guardian," she explained, as she suddenly notices that Thomas has run off. She apologizes as she prepares to find the little track star, but adds that she isn't as worried as she would be in other places. "I know he can't leave with anyone; he's here somewhere." As she explained further that she values cleanliness in a place she takes her kids, we see Thomas rolling around on the floor. "I used to take Thomas and my daughter Amanda, 6, to some other places in the area but they just weren't clean. Chuck E. Cheese's is always so clean and that's important to me."

Laurie added another tidbit of insight into what kids like to do. "No matter how little the boys, they always want to play the games like video or redemption. Girls are more content with the sea of balls, the maze of tubes, and the animated shows."

A group of children from Gentilly Baptist Preschool were at Chuck E. Cheese's on a field trip, marking the end of the school year term. Gentilly Baptist's Pam Leysath also cited cleanliness and added that she likes the variety of activities. "We come about five or six times a year for various occasions. It's a nice field trip because it's safe. It's one place we go where no one fights because everyone has something to do and they behave beautifully. They look forward to it weeks ahead."

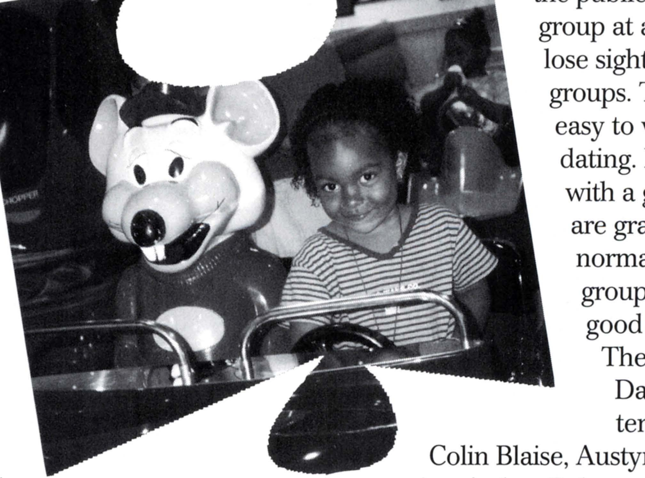
From left: Madison Granito, Paul Marcello, and Taylor Granito with tickets won on Total Eclipse.

Security is also of utmost importance to Gentilly Baptist's Arlee Holland, one of the teachers, and she related this story: "One of our parents met us at Chuck E. Cheese's and when we left she decided to stay with her child a little longer. When she was ready to leave they would not let her out of the door because her child had a different stamp on his hand. They called us and we assured them that it was the mother and it was OK to let the child leave with her. If we had any doubts about how seriously Chuck E. Cheese's takes this safety issue to heart, I think they were erased that day!"



Kasey Duvuramy (l) and Chanel Jones on the fire engine kiddie ride.

Among those with the church group were Madison Casey, 2; Kirby Jackson, 4; Kasey Duvuramy, 4; Kalyn Cousins, 4; Sydny Raymond, 3; and Chanel Jones, 5.



Sydny Raymond shares her favorite ride with friend Chuck E. Cheese.

These kids were unanimous in their likes and practically in unison named the sea of balls as one of their favorites. Kalyn added that she like the motorcycle kiddie ride; Sydny liked to ride on the car kiddie ride with a Chuck E. Cheese's character in the front seat; and Chanel also likes the red racing car. We tried to catch up with Kirby but he seemed to like everything from the sea of balls and the soft maze attraction to the redemption games and Skee-Ball.

Another group from Prime Step Day Care & Learning Center was also celebrating a kindergarten graduation with seven students. Director Barbara Perez Aymond reinforced the need for security, "Kids love this place. You have the games, the food, and the safety is built-in. When you walk in they stamp your hand and the childrens' hands and no one can walk out without matching stamps. When we've taken the children to other locations, we would have to post one of our chaperones at each exit so none of the kids would leave. When you're responsible for someone else's kids, you take that job very seriously. Here we are confident that the children are safe."

Aymond's school has been coming to this Chuck E. Cheese's location for eight years. "If anything, it's improved since they remodeled. We usually come with 100 or more children; with our summer camp this year it will be 175 children. This brings up another thing I like about this place; they don't overbook camp groups. I've seen places that might have several groups in at the same time and it's complete chaos. Chuck E. Cheese's will be open to the public but book only one large group at a time. It's too easy to lose sight of kids with too many groups. The people here are very easy to work with and accommodating. For instance, we're here with a group of seven kids who are graduating. They might not normally book such a small group, but they know we are a good customer."

The graduates of Prime Step Day Care & Learning Center were: Ashley Bartin, Colin Blaise, Austyn Holmes, Hailey Mattice, Arthur Robertson, Trey Weeks, and Jared Williams. We asked them what they like to do for entertainment. Hailey Mattice likes the Frog Ball and the red race car kiddie ride. The boys, Trey Weeks and Arthur Robertson, said that the video games are their favorite (just like Laurie Woodard noted earlier).

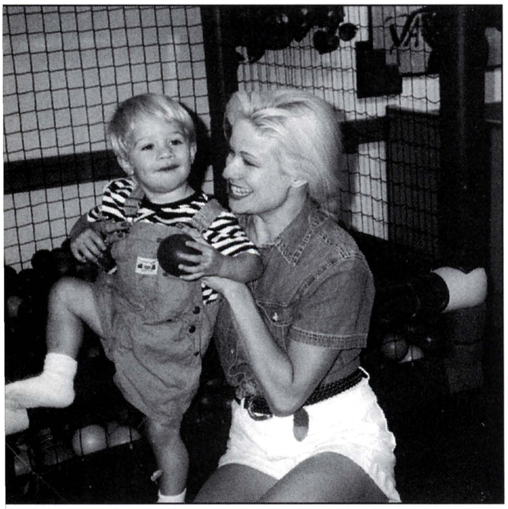
> ***"I think here's the lesson for those planning to cater to kids: be patient, kind, considerate, helpful, and be prepared for anything."***

We noticed a group of children getting tickets from Total Eclipse and couldn't pass up the photo opportunity. Paul Marcello, 5, and twins Madison and Taylor Granito, 5, were plucking tickets out of the machine nearly as fast as their mothers could reach over to hold them. Paul's mother Lisa Marcello said, "We encourage the children to save their tickets to get a bigger prize. It's a good lesson. My older daughter wants to save for the better prizes. We saw a football in a store but Paul didn't want that one, he wants to save his tickets for the same one he saw at the redemption counter. Kids may not understand money, but they do understand tickets!"

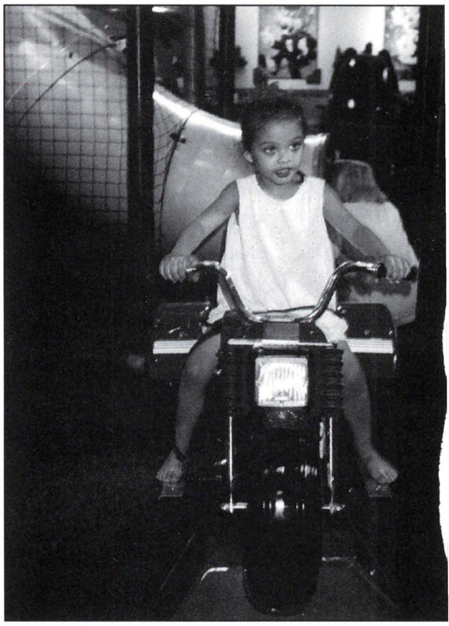
It was a lesson to us visiting a location dedicated to kids but knowing that parents are the ones who are making the entertainment decisions. We saw parents enjoying the salad bar which is chock full of fresh ingredients, and eating slices of inviting pizza. Said one parent, "You think of Chuck E. Cheese's as a place for kids and it is that. However, I have a comfortable place to sit and watch my kids and I'd put this salad bar up against any in town. And this may sound strange, but if I walk into a place with my kids and it's not clean I'll turn around and leave even if there's a lot of crying going on."

A note here: We offer a special thanks to technical manager Thank Tran and shift leader April Hogan who were gracious in helping us have our conversations with the kids, but they were not neglecting their duties. Thank was picking up paper on the floor and wiping down tables in between questions and I saw April as a blur delivering I don't know how many pizzas and counting tickets while we were there. In fact, remember Thomas the human bullet we mentioned earlier. Well, his mother found him crying at the very top of the soft maze structure. He was afraid to come down. Thank offered to make the climb to help him but Thomas' mother decided to go herself. I'd call that offer way beyond the call of duty!

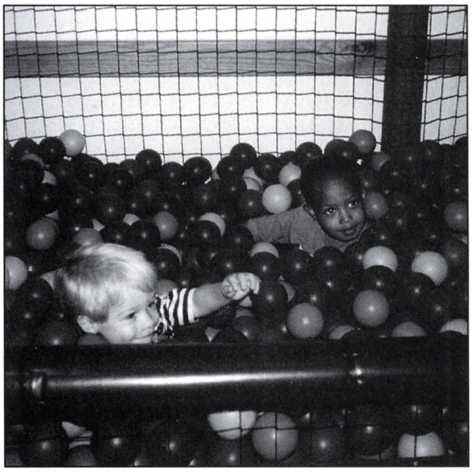
Thomas Woodard and his mom Laurie.



April and Thank both had gigantic smiles on their faces no matter what crisis befell them. I think here's the lesson for those planning to cater to kids: be patient, kind, considerate, helpful, and be prepared for anything. Maybe everyone in this industry could take a lesson from them. After all, even older customers are nothing but kids at heart! ▲

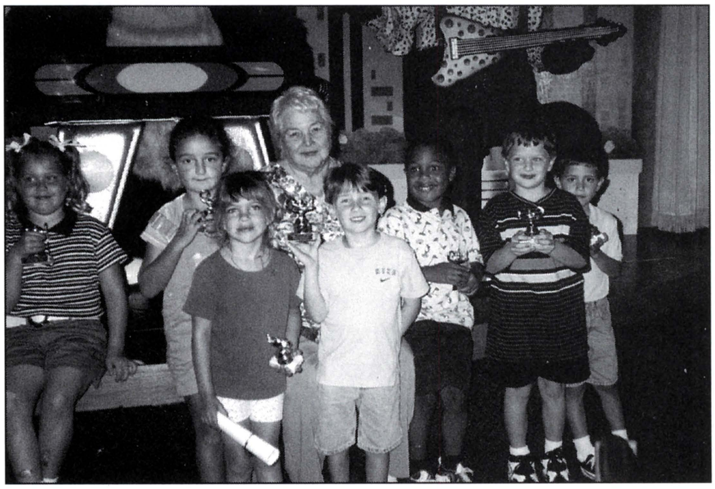


Kalyn Cousins said she loves riding this motorcycle.



Thomas Woodard (l) and Kirby Jackson love the sea of balls.

The kindergarten graduation class from Prime Step Day Care & Learning Center.



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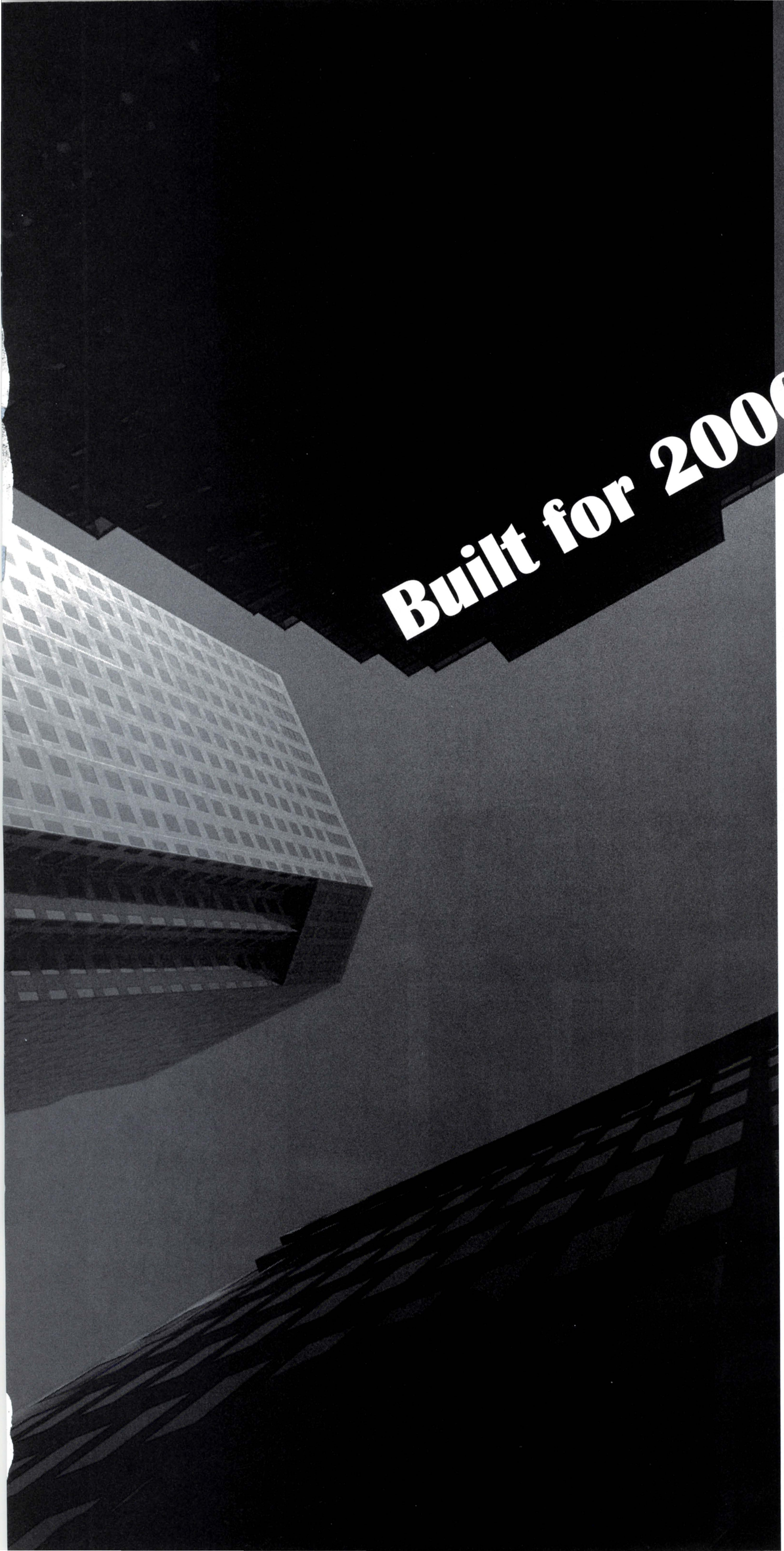

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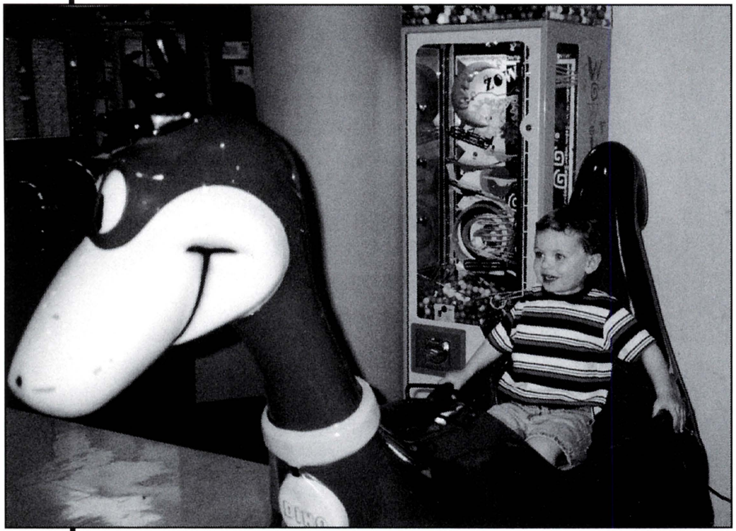
BILL CHILES
National Kiddie Ride Association



Brendan Chiles rides Dino.

Children today are far more sophisticated than they were 10 years ago. Children are not afraid to make mistakes and learn from them. This is why a child will continue to put quarters in a game. They will keep trying until they have mastered the game (or have run out of money).

The "try until you succeed" philosophy should be used by all coin-op operators in their routes. Operators need to continue trying new equipment at each location to see success in the coin box.

Children grow up using coin-op equipment their entire life without even realizing it. Until recently, a child's first coin-op experience was as a toddler on a small kiddie ride. Now with Carousel International's development of an infant safety seat for its Carousel kiddie ride (which replaces one of the animals) even infants can ride safely on kiddie rides.

During the toddler years, children will become interested in other coin-op equipment such as kiddie games and specialty gum machines. They may be too young to chew the gumball, but they like to watch it spin, whirl, and drop into the chute. And, of course, they are still interested in kiddie rides.

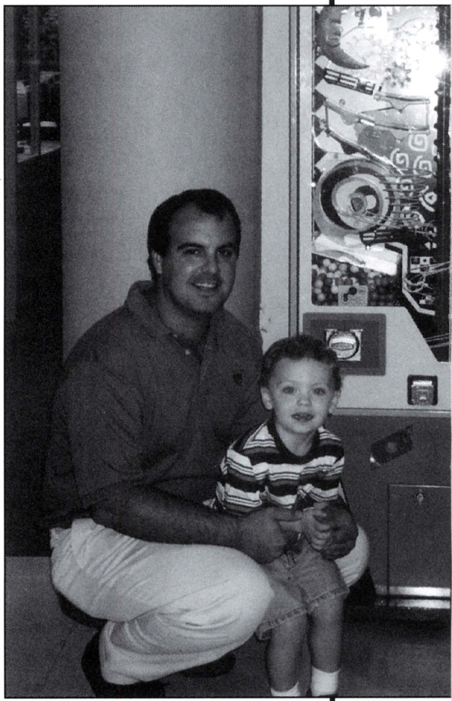
Then, when they reach the age of three to four years old, you can't keep them away from the plush and candy cranes, soda and snack machines, bulk racks, kiddie video games, and redemption pieces, and they are still using the kiddie rides, kiddie games, and specialty gum machines.

When children reach five, the parents turn into the family ATM machine dispersing money for video games, pinball, redemption, kiddie rides, specialty gum machines, cranes, or whatever machine a child wants to try next.

When the children reach the teenage years they're ready to master practically every video game, not to mention the consumption of products from the soda and snack machines.

Then they are in their early 20s putting money in countertop games, pool and foosball tables, and jukeboxes, and continue to do this for the rest of their lives. Then these coin-op patrons have children of their own and the cycle begins again.

Coin-op play for the infant and toddler years is mostly dominated by kiddie rides. The kiddie ride industry has become far more sophisticated in the last seven years with the popularity of licensed rides. Licensed kiddie rides have been around since 1957 with the introduction of Exhibit's Roy Roger's Trigger horse. Today's licensed rides have created locations for kiddie rides where they were not accepted before.



Bill Chiles and his son Brendan by the *Wowie Zowie!* kinetic gumball machine.

The Wal-Mart stores have put a Kid's Choice program in force, highlighting licensed and premium kiddie rides placed in prime indoor locations. Wal-Mart has set guidelines on what type of ride will be permitted indoors and the frequency of rotation and collections. These guidelines are very work-able and some operators exceed Wal-Mart's guidelines because it keeps profits higher. Operators report that collections at Wal-Mart locations had never reached these levels before this program was put into place. Wal-Mart still wants the "generic" cars, horses, and carousel rides in front of their entrances because they are still profitable for both parties.

> ***"The coin-op industry is starting to recover from the last few years of bad collections and should look at coin-op geared for children as a firm stepping stone."***

Manufacturers make kiddie rides with licensed characters and more interactive features like lights, buttons, and video screens to appeal to today's high-tech children. There are rides that vend gumballs, dispense redemption tickets, and take the child's photo while riding. Kiddie ride manufacturers are working very hard to get equipment that is profitable for operators and appeals to children, parents, and store managers.

But all this work comes with a price. Kiddie ride manufacturers are facing increasing research and development and production costs and therefore must charge higher prices for their rides.

The return on investment is still excellent on kiddie rides, and most rides will last well over 10 years with a little paint and maintenance. Some National Kiddie Ride Association members are operating kiddie rides that are over 40 years old! What other coin-op equipment can you get 40 years out of?

Many NKRA members have been diversifying into specialty gum machines. Spiral gumball machines were introduced a few years back and were a huge success. It seems almost every location has a spiral gumball machine, including our local lumber yard! Operators were looking for a "new twist" on gum machines and found it with the kinetic gum machines. These machines are very popular and appealing to children as well as adults. I see people ranging in age from two to 60 pumping money into the kinetic gum machines. The numbers that these machines are doing are phenomenal.

Another type of equipment that NKRA members are branching into is what I refer to as "mini" redemption. These machines redeem the prize, and a redemption counter is not required. Candy and plush cranes and prize vendors such as Sports Arena fall into this category. Jumbo cranes have been around for years and operators were happy to make $100 to $200 a month on the old cranes. But operators are finding that with newer cranes and the hot new plush, they are exceeding the old monthly collections every week. Cranes are popping up in every grocery store, restaurant, and discount store in every city.

Kiddie games are the next section of the cycle. These games are usually associated with redemption centers. My two-year-old son Brendan was introduced to the kiddie games during his first trip to a Chuck E. Cheese's. He went completely nuts over the games. He was encouraged to whack at things with a mallet, stomp and jump all over a platform, spray water on animals, and throw balls in and at everything he saw. My wife and I were happy serving as his personal token machine and the cheering section for his wonderful accomplishments! He was so proud of himself and I only spent $20 plus dinner for his enjoyment. What a bargain!

Parents use coin-op equipment as a reward for a child when he acts good while shopping. When my wife and I tell our son that we are going to Wal-Mart he immediately replies, "If Brendan is good, he gets to watch two balls and ride the horsie and Batmobile?" Translated, it means dad spends 50 cents in the Wowie Zowie kinetic gum machine, 50 cents on the Thunderhorse ride, and 50 cents on the Batmobile kiddie ride. I have just spent a minimum of $2 on coin-op equipment and I haven't even reached the store yet!

We have offered to buy him a small toy instead of coin-op play but he won't accept. He loves the time riding and playing the coin-op equipment. We also rarely shop stores that do not have coin-op equipment because of our child's interest in it.

Coin-op equipment has always played a huge part in my life, but I never realized how big until I started working in the coin-op industry back in 1987. My mother still tells me stories of my brothers and me riding the tank and horse at the neighborhood burger joint before I can remember. I turned 13 in 1980 and I personally helped create the video game boom during the early '80s. I lived, breathed, and slept *Missile Command, Donkey Kong*, and *Tempest.* When I turned 20, I bought my own Defender video game and foosball table for my first house and a few months later started part-time at NKRA.

Now I am married with a child, and I am trying to convince my wife that buying a kiddie ride for our house would be a good investment. It seems that I will never outgrow children's coin-op equipment.

The coin-op industry is starting to recover from the last few years of bad collections and should look at coin-op geared for children as a firm stepping stone. Parents will happily spend a dollar or two on their children but will hesitate to spend the same money on themselves. The parents' enjoyment comes from seeing the child smile while riding a kiddie ride or the excitement in their eyes when they are playing a game. The one segment in coin-op that is virtually recession-proof is coin-op for children. ▲

Bill Chiles is the vice president of the National Kiddie Ride Association. As he mentioned, he now has a young son who is the perfect person to let Bill know exactly how children view the industry we try so hard to gear towards them. You can contact the NKRA at (573)636-3564.

FOR KIDS ONLY

SMALLEST CUSTOMERS NEED TO HAVE FUN

IT'S HARD TO BEAT A KIDDIE RIDE FOR STAYING POWER, STEADY INCOME, LOW MAINTENANCE, AND THE ABILITY TO APPEAR FRESH TO NEW GENERATIONS.

WE TALKED TO A CROSS SECTION OF OPERATORS TO FIND OUT HOW KIDDIE RIDES FIT OR DON'T FIT INTO THEIR BUSINESS PLANS. ONLY THEY KNOW WHAT'S REALLY HAPPENING IN THEIR MARKETS.

RON KINNEY
KINNEY AMUSEMENT & VENDING
SPRINGFIELD, MO.

The nice thing about kiddie rides is they last a long time, the revenue is steady, and they don't have many breakdowns. No coils or CDs to mess with. Just keep them clean. Revenue is not as big as a driver or CD jukebox, but it's steady.

Our company is celebrating its 50th year in the amusement business. We added kiddie rides about 10 years ago when the local Bass Pro Shops sporting goods minimall wanted some kind of fish ride. We put in a *Porpie* ride from Carousel. Then, as we went along, we would suggest kiddie rides because they are a natural. Often, when we set up a game room in a skating rink or bowling center it's nice to have that kiddie ride right there so mom and dad can see it. Kiddie rides promote a good atmosphere and a good image.

We also have a kiddie ride in a local McDonald's along with a pinball, two videos, and a candy crane. The candy crane does fantastic. McDonald's has its own minibasketball and minifootball games that we service. That's how we got into that location. Kiddie rides are a good mix in our equipment; we even mention kiddie rides on our business cards.

We offer a variety of rides: horses, sports cars, dirt bikes, jeep, and locomotive—14 rides. Most of our games are inside. We touch up the paint and sometimes change the color. Anything that sticks out will attract a kid. An orange horse gets more attention than a brown horse, and a bright yellow car gets more attention than a dark color car.

One of our best locations is the Exotic Animal Paradise drive-through park that has a restaurant. We operate the game room there and feature four or five kiddie rides. The kids just play the heck out of them. We also found that kiddie rides do well in laundromats.

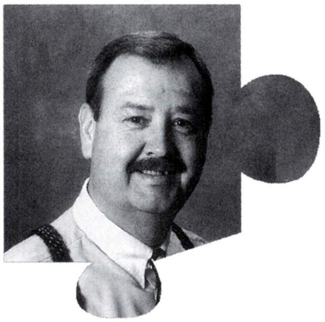
BRYAN SCOPEL
ALPHA AMUSEMENTS
MADISON HEIGHTS, MICH.

We operate 16 kiddie rides but have not bought one since June 1995. We were operating them in a lot of Discovery Zone clones and Chuck E. Cheese's clones that were independents. Some of these independents closed and we have been filtering those rides into locations such as McDonald's, our summertime accounts, and local sports rinks (hockey, soccer, and roller).

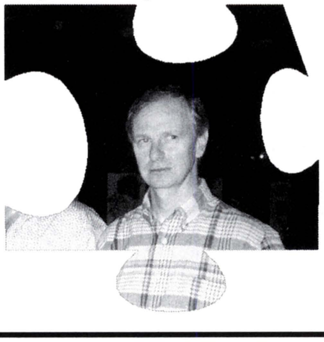
A kiddie ride complements other equipment. In locations where we have 15 to 20 games and a smattering of ages, we zap something in for the younger group.

We have a few licensed rides; most are traditional rides that go up and down, such as boats, shuttlecraft, and cars. Some of the best earners are the shuttles and the licensed rides—they seem to do a little bit better. Insurance is covered under our general liability policy.

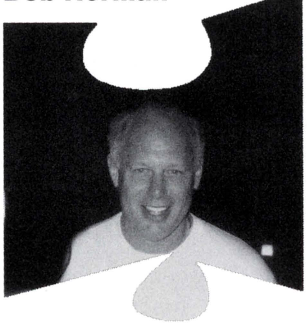
Ron Kinney



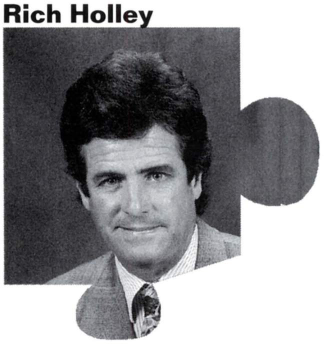
Bryan Scopel



Bob Herman



Rich Holley



I think we could be more aggressive in this market, because it is profitable, but we are going after our most profitable venues right now and kiddie rides have not been on a priority basis.

BOB HERMAN
ACE AMUSEMENTS
BROOKLYN, N.Y.

I have five kiddie rides that I added as an experiment. I knew exactly what I was getting into. I was looking for something with long-term stability so I was satisfied with less of a return. As basically a bar operator, I was getting out of the mix of what I do best. For my operation, expenses are higher. I have better locations and can't afford to deal with lesser locations.

Bottom line: kiddie rides may not be profitable for me. While the rides are safe, I am concerned about frivolous lawsuits, the cost of separate insurance, and a return that's not as great a return as we are accustomed to in our business

RICH HOLLEY
SOUTHEAST GAME BROKERS
TAMPA, FLA.

I've had kiddie rides since 1992. I had to find something to replace a certain amount of 'lost income.' Kiddie rides are one of the many areas I've branched out into to help not only replace some of that income, but to find a more stable income.

My goal is to reduce the chunk of my pie that says 'income earned by video.' Kiddie rides are one of the areas I've turned to. At every opportune moment I purchase a kiddie ride.

I now operate about 35 kiddie rides. I will have them forever—they are made of fiberglass. That makes my return on investment more attractive. Kiddie rides are more long term as opposed to an overnight thing. The most I have to do is paint them every few years. The paint job makes the ride, also blinking lights and noises. I'm not into high-tech rides. All my rides are basic up and down, side to side rides.

They do extremely well in any location that promotes birthday parties. Every child has a birthday party and that fact is being exploited heavily. The birthday party industry is huge. Put the right kind of traffic in front of my pieces and they will do what they are designed to do—catch quarters. Some of my rides are on 50-cent play.

To survive in this industry I had to find other ways to fill in the blanks. Besides kiddie rides I am also into bulk vending including stickers, bubble gum, and candy machines. It's worked out very nicely and took up some slack. You don't get phenomenal collections like you get out of the simulator games, but long after the simulators are gone from the face of the Earth I will still have those other machines.

JOHN LEWIS
A & A SALES & SERVICE
WAUKEGAN, ILL.

We got involved with kiddie rides to satisfy customers and give them variety. We have 20 to 25 kiddie rides in our family entertainment center locations. We thought they would do well and give the younger kids something to do when their older siblings were playing our videos and redemption games. Most are inside where we have game rooms and some are outside in small shopping malls. We don't set them anywhere we don't have a game room.

As far as making really good money, they have never done that well for us. Probably eight of the rides are licensed rides. We've also got some less expensive rides and they seem to do as well as the licensed rides in my locations. For us, the income did not see a big boost for the licensed product.

Our kiddie rides are covered under our normal liability insurance as an add-on. We operate some kiddie rides in Wisconsin and, because they are moving rides, we have to get a mechanical inspection permit. All the kiddie rides must have the permit. In Wisconsin, this also applies to videos with a moving cockpit.

MIKE EVANS
YELLOWSTONE SPECIALTY CO.
IDAHO FALLS, IDAHO

We have a real small route of nine standard kiddie rides (cars, animal figures, helicopters). We've had some of them since the early '80s when locations were asking for the rides. They have been extremely steady in places such as bowling centers, family restaurants, campgrounds, and summer resorts.

Our company has been around for 55 years. Kiddie rides have been one of the mainstays, a constant earner, and something that has not gone out of style. Minimal maintenance is required.

ARNIE ARONOVITZ
APPLE VENDING
PHILADELPHIA, PA.

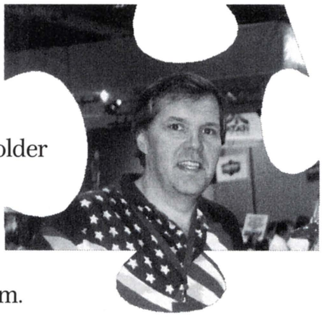
Two years ago we got out of kiddie rides. We used to operate them along the New Jersey shore. The insurance became cost-prohibitive. A child left unattended underscored to us how we would be liable even when not at fault.

FRANCIS FREMIN
DELTA MUSIC
THIBODEAUX, LA.

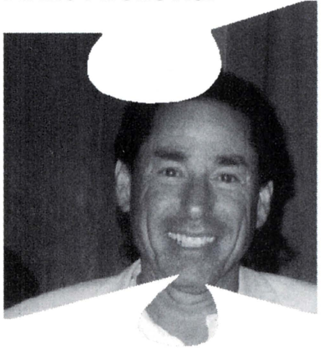
We added kiddie rides to our route six or seven years ago for a mall spot. We now have four kiddie rides at Pinocchio's Pizza Playhouse family entertainment center in Houma, La., one licensed ride in a McDonald's Playland, and a few in laundromats. The one at McDonald's is doing great. I'm trying to get more kiddie rides into McDonald's stores.

Kiddie rides are not the same caliber of income you get from redemption games, but they are something that you need to have for the toddlers to get them introduced to amusements early. Kiddie rides are something you don't have to re-buy; they are good forever. They don't seem to lose their popularity. Kids mostly like the licensed rides and that's basically what the kiddie ride industry is going to—rides that relate to what the kids see on television and elsewhere. ▲

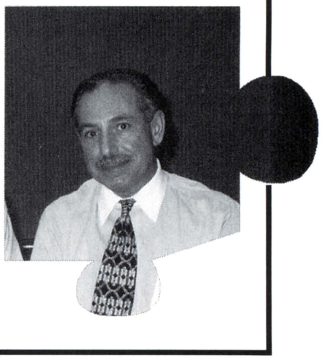
John Lewis



Arnie Aronovitz



Francis Fremin



Indoor playground operators share their insight and experience

For this month's issue devoted to children's entertainment, we contacted seven operators of soft modular play equipment in an effort to glean a little wisdom about the nuts and bolts of providing this most basic play experience.

While a staple attraction like indoor playgrounds or soft activity zones are ostensibly similar in nature, regardless of location setting, operators of this type of equipment share widely diverging views on the value it brings to the business of children's entertainment.

Some see the units as moneymakers, pure and simple, despite the increasing presence of fast food chains offering free play. They argue that indoor playgrounds, when properly placed within a family entertainment center, can generate the kind of enthusiasm required to turn a profit.

"It's definitely a money maker; on a slow week we put 1,500 kids through the unit," claims Bud Murray of Happy Tymes Family Fun Center in Warrington, Pa. "We have a four-level unit with 16 activities inside, not including the four-level slide and a frog hopper right in front of the unit. That hits you as soon as you walk in the door."

"When you put in soft modular play you are convinced it's a money maker, and it does make money," adds Angelo Cappetta of Carousel FEC in Seaside Height, N.J. "But people are surprised they have to pay and a small percentage want to test you."

Other operators see the units strictly as a value added service they provide their customers, offering a basic play experience for smaller kids and a way to extend the average customer's stay in the location.

"Soft activity zones will not make a profit on their own; it's a matter of what else is here," said Amy Donaldson of Playworks in Prior Lake, Minn. "How many people are going to come to a large play structure every weekend. We see it as a value added to our other attractions. Parents can sit down while their children play for half an hour."

"Our main goal is to keep the family here as long as possible, and we don't always enforce the charge," explained Gregg Borman, who manages the Camelot Park location in Livermore, Calif. "Every McDonald's in the Bay area has a soft playground, and our customers come here with the belief that it is free. We put it in to round out the family experience."

Court Huish of Huish Family Fun Centers and Bullwinkle's restaurants, who helped designed a specially themed playground structure named Kidopolis, said soft activity zones have been profitable in some instances while bringing intangible value in others. "We have found it very successful having Kidopolis in our family restaurants," he noted.

Age and size

The target age for indoor playgrounds ranges slightly from location to location--anywhere from toddlers to young teens--with some facilities closely monitoring the size and/or age of its patrons and others taking a more casual approach.

Borman said his location imposes a height limit of 44 inches for safety and parental peace of mind. "Parents don't like the idea of larger children in the unit with their smaller kids," he said. "And if you have too many heavy kids, you are putting excessive strain on the unit."

Huish said his company family fun centers and restaurants have also imposed a height restriction on their playground customers. "In our main business, we get a full range of family members and we have to monitor the units and have rules," he said.

Conversely, the Jeeper's chain of family fun centers imposes no restriction on who can enjoy the indoor playground. "We try to design them so they can deal with older kids and adults but we do have a separate area for toddlers," said the company's Kevin Smith.

Gary Reedy of Amusement Unlimited in Burke, Va., said that soft activity zones in several of his four locations have also drawn interest from older customers, including "teenagers and even adults from corporate outings. It can be a party holder and a body holder."

However, Reedy added that his locations are quick to draw the line when children are too old to interact with the younger kids and make sure that parents also keep an eye on their kids. "A 10-year-old will run over a three-year-old," he said. "We don't make any qualms about babysitting. It's play at your own risk."

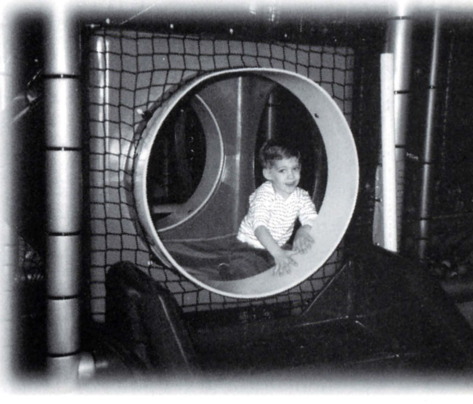
Doing the numbers

Pricing strategies also differ, often reflecting the philosophy of the operator in question. Some charge a flat fee ranging from $2 to $5 for unlimited time, while others offer lower rates for short time increments. Most also include some soft playground time as part of party or other package deals.

Reedy said his locations found success with a Quick Play strategy that offered 30 minutes for as little as $2, but has moved to a flat fee to simplify payment for customers. "Time limits were confusing and sometimes caused problems when customers complained at the front counter," he said. Carousel's Cappetta has taken this approach to the extreme, offering customers five minutes of playground time for $1. "By then they are bored," he claims. However, many in the industry appear to have settled on the flat fee for unlimited time approach.

In fact, the irony of drawing on the appeal of this kind of universal attraction is that by its nature it offers little in the way of innovation and will inevitably lose some of its earning power over time. "I'm not sure you make a big difference (by updating an existing system) and my impression is that people really put them in as ancillary attractions," said Huish.

When asked about the minimum capital and space necessary to invest in soft activity zones, most operators suggested that a minimum of $100,000 to $120,000 is necessary to get in the game. The space estimates differ depending upon construction strategies with the lowest possible figure coming in just over 1,000 square feet.



Many traditional playground structures were built over a large footprint, hoping to generate interest and enthusiasm through sheer size, but in recent years family fun center operators have opted for high-rise-style units to cut down on the square footage. The challenge operators face is to build soft activity zones that surpass the free offerings from the fast food industry without shelling out more than the unit can recover over the course of a year or two.

"The challenge operators face is to build soft activity zones that surpass the free offerings from the fast food industry without shelling out more than the unit can recover over the course of a year or two."

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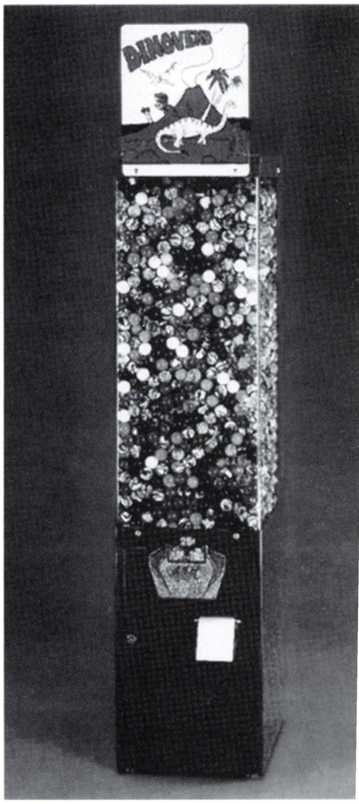

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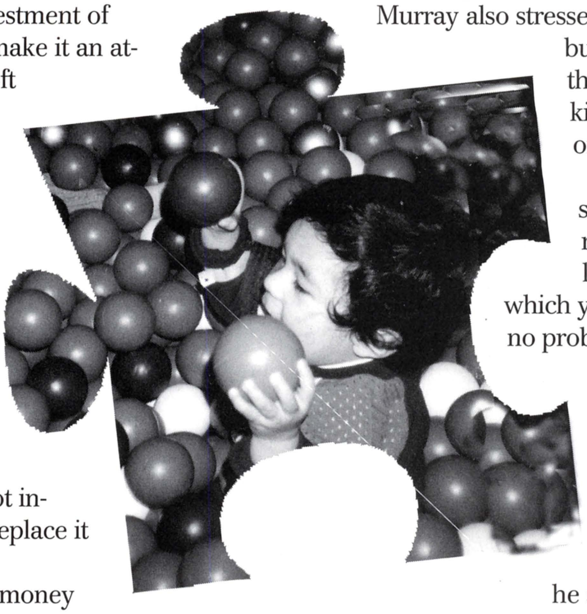
One of the few operators subscribing to the big-is-better philosophy, Murray said a good indoor playground should require an investment of $250,000. “You have got to make it an attraction,” he said. ‘To buy a soft modular playground and not make it big is a waste of money.”

However, many operators take a more conservative approach, arguing for smaller systems and pointing to the availability of many used units currently on the market. In fact, Donaldson said her facility was currently in the process of removing some of its 15,000-square-foot indoor playground in order to replace it with other attractions.



“They don’t make a lot of money so they shouldn’t take up a lot of space,” said Reedy. “We try to take them up and out. But it is going be there for a long time and if you have birthday parties, you have to have a playground.”

Safety and maintenance

The key to maintaining a safe and successful indoor playground is rooted in the basic operational skills necessary to run most family fun centers. These focus on issues such as cleanliness, order, lighting, and essential customer considerations.

“The greatest source of claims we have had are falls and collisions between kids and they can just as easily happen anywhere in the facility as they can in the playground,” said Jeeper’s Kevin Smith.

In addition to limiting the size of children in the unit, Borman said it is essential to make sure that all pads are kept in good working order and there are no sharp edges. Murray also stressed the need for updating the padding, but said new plastic-base units were not the answer to safety issue. “I think the kids are going to slide more than they do on the pads,” he explained.

Cappetta said he takes the issue of safety one step further, assigning a permanent attendant to the unit. “She collects the money and is like a traffic cop, which you really need,” he said. “We have had no problems with safety liability.”

Reedy said he needed a traffic cop of his own when he realized that the indoor playground in one of his locations was experiencing a “traffic pattern problem” posing a safety hazard and requiring a quick redesign. Other issues that have to be considered, he said, include building attractions that are too tall for young children and the placement of ball pools where larger children can collide with smaller one.

In fact, basic maintenance and safety repair can run as much as 10 percent of the cost of the unit over three years, not counting the labor costs required for regular cleaning--the issue most mentioned by all the operators interviewed.

“The biggest problem with the play unit is cleaning it every day,” said Murray, echoing almost word for word the sentiment of his fellow operators.

“People don’t realize the amount of maintenance and cleaning required by playgrounds,” added Reedy. “In my first location, we had three ball pits. All we did was clean balls pits. In my newest location, the fourth with an indoor playground, we chose a moon bounce over a ball pit.” ▲

Photos courtesy of Enchanted Castle.

From *Play Meter’s* 1998 directory, here is a list of soft modular play companies. Call them for more information.

Airspace USA
(800)872-1319
(704)258-1390

Custom Machine Enterprise
(915)698-8151

Delta Play
(800)361-7529
(604)591-6612

Funstation Associates
(516)599-3752

Leisure Actitivies Unlimited
(800)265-0829
(905)727-6945

Little Tikes
(317)580-9374

Pentes Play
(800)617-2158
(704)552-2428

Playland Services
(800)982-4622
(706)865-0737

Playsafe
(972)422-1301

PlaySmart
(800)940-PLAY
(660)829-0523

Prime Play
(888)PRIME-00
(604)944-7529

Soft-Play
(800)782-PLAY
(704)875-6550

Space Walk
(800)622-6026
(504)464-6026

Wapello Fabrications
(319)523-8371

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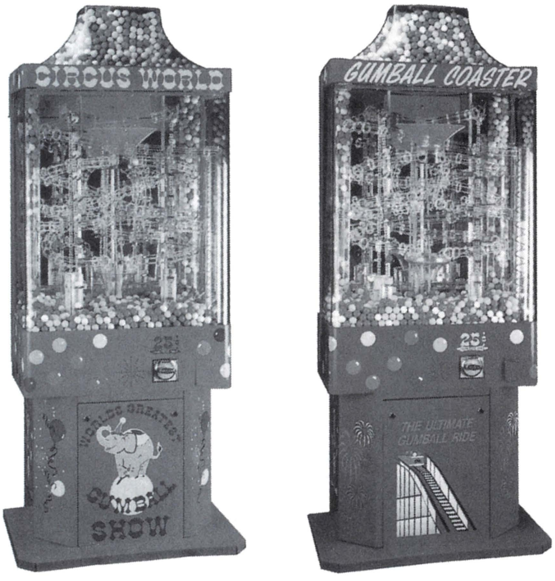
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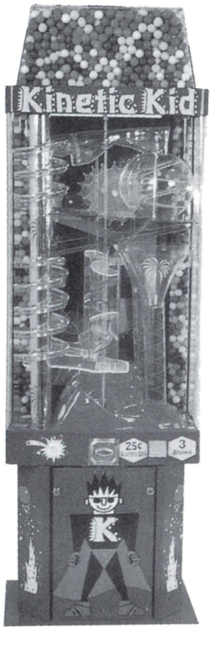
Kinetic Kid
25¢
3 Shows
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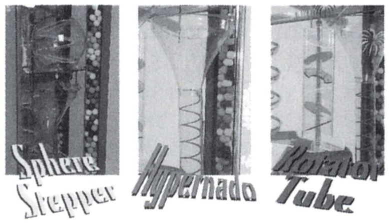
Kinetic Kid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FOR KIDS ONLY

Capsules capture COINS

Looking for low-cost additions to your route? Maximize the use of small spaces with bulk vending units on a child's eye level.

It's no secret that little children can coax quarters from their parents and grandparents with ease. They naturally gravitate to colorful, tuneful vending units that dispense capsules.

From the parents' point of view, capsules may be preferable to gum for the preschool crowd. Gum is chewed quickly (sometimes swallowed, to the parents' dismay) but a prize stays around for a while. A prize can keep a child occupied in the car on the way home. Anything to make an outing with small fry as pleasant as possible.

We spoke with a number of companies that offer capsule vending units and asked about market potential, trends, suitable locations, revenue expectations, unit costs, and their machine lineup. A handy reference guide follows.

25¢
Toy Runner

Toy Runner by O.K. Mfg.

O.K. Mfg.

"You must catch the eye before you can catch the quarter," says O.K.'s president Jeff Ostler. He considers that to be the appeal of the company's *Toy Runner* capsule machine. "We have gone to great effort to see that *Toy Runner* grabs potential consumers' eyes and that they find it appealing," he adds.

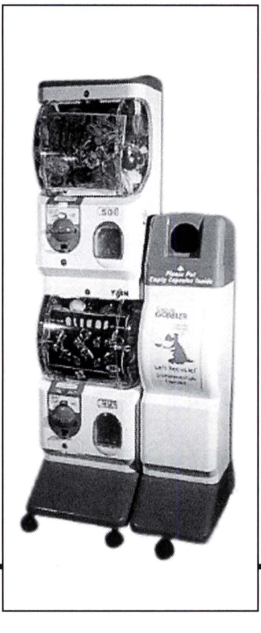
Part of this new product's appeal comes from O.K.'s popular *Road Runner* Spiral Gumball Machine.

Ostler sees great market potential in capsule vendors: "They can be set at any location. Due to the fact that there is no worry of the product being edible, it is a great machine for bowling centers and roller skating rinks where a traditional gumball machine could not be set. The merchandise offered in the capsule can be changed and thus appeal to a potential market of varying age groups. Many vendors offer items that appeal to adults, such as jewelry, calculators, and tamaguchis."

Capsule vendors are reasonably priced for their longevity. According to Ostler, the *Toy Runner* is offered at $599 and vendors can expect to gross between $150-$250 per month. He feels that if vendors offer a quality product in the capsule their venture will be profitable.

KDK Enterprises

Kevin Francoise, president of KDK, maker of the *Slimboy* and *Nintendo 64 Slimboy*, says, "We are trying to come up with a collectible feature in each of our lines. We want to make sure that every vend is a quality product and that there aren't any rubber spiders in the mix."



Slimboy and *Gobbler* by KDK

Big Top Mini Pinball by Mayoni

In the fall KDK plans to introduce licensed Thomas the Tank items.

Francoise explained that a lot of machines are coming up with alternative pay structures, with bill acceptors giving change to customers. "The traditional vend may not be 25 cents, but 35 cents or 75 cents," he notes. This goes hand-in-hand with trying to vend quality products.

Because of the size of KDK's *Slimboy*, it can be put in the same space as small vending machines (it requires only 1.5 square feet of floor space). Features include product loading and collections from the front of the unit, upper and lower units that eliminate pipe stands, and a wheeled base with brakes. The company's *Capsule Gobbler* is an optional unit that sits next to the *Slimboy* and recycles the plastic capsules.

Francoise is proud of the double compartment design of the *Slimboy.* "It allows you to vary the selection of products on a regular basis," he said. "With capsule toys you can rotate products aimed at totally different audiences."

The company's *Nintendo 64* machine does well in video stores that rent Nintendo home system games, also family restaurants, children's shoe stores, mall locations, and hair salons. States Fancoise: "There are limitless locations out there."

MAYONI ENTERPRISES

Mayoni offers an extensive line of capsule vendors: *Ziggy, Fun Shuttle, Sergeant Major, Dinovend,* and the *Big Top Mini Pinball.*

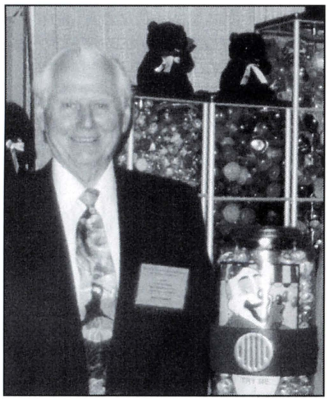
"Kid's can't resist *Ziggy,*" says Julie Hart of Mayoni. He has an attraction timer and swings back and forth and whistles. There's a lot going on with *Ziggy.*"

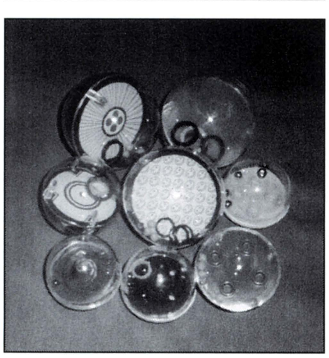
Hart sees an increased interest in these types of machines, primarily those with interaction like the *Big Top Mini Pinball* where kids get to play a game as well as get a prize. It can accommodate one-inch and two-inch capsules, rubber balls, and gumballs.

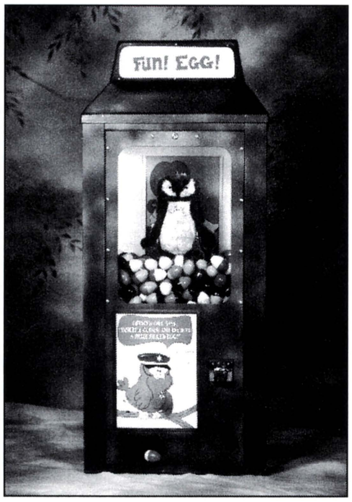
Hart says *Big Top Mini Pinball* does very well anywhere regular size pinballs are located because the kids don't yet have the skill for the big game but they can play a smaller version. Kids can't lose the ball. A lot of Mayoni customers have the unit in FECs and arcades.

Mayoni's capsule vendors range in price from $325 to $1,194, says Hart. In really good locations they can generate as much as $350 a month at the highest level, but its safer to estimate $200-$250 a month in a good location.

Hart remarks, "The impulse machine market goes in cycles and experiences peaks and valleys, but bulk vending machines have been a very consistent market for us."


Ken McPhail by the new *Talking Vendor* by Actionmatic.


Actionmatic designed its own challenging games in capsule format.


Officer Owl by NET

NATIONAL ENTERTAINMENT TECHNOLOGIES

"Preschoolers are the perfect customers for our machines," says Bob Clair of NET, which produces the *Farmer Bear* and *Officer Owl* units that use visual animation and electronic speech to appeal to small children.

Adds Clair, "What they are buying is the plastic egg and the toy is just a bonus. The interactive characters of our machines adds value."

Clair advises that malls, supermarkets, discount stores, bowling centers, and FECs are among the many good locations for capsule machines.

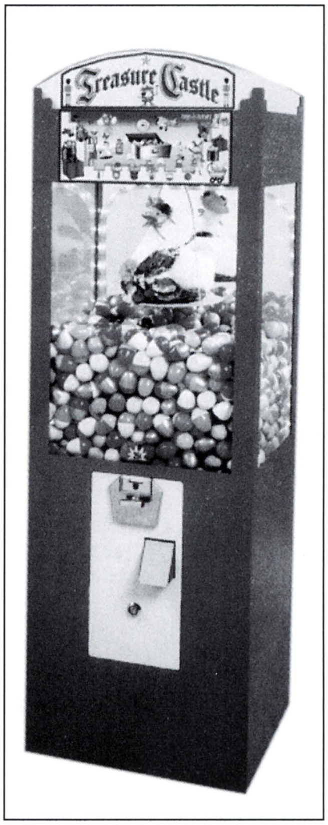
Regarding market potential, he says, "I think there is a lot of room for expansion into FECs. These machines have been seen nationwide so they are not necessarily hot. But there are a lot of potential locations out there.

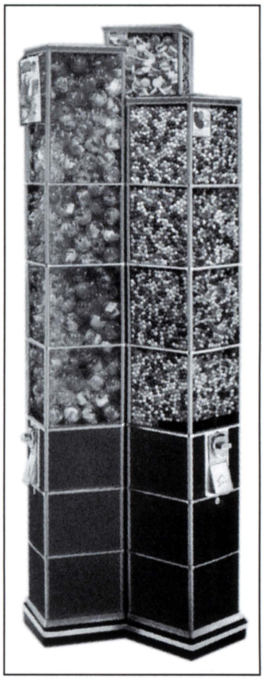
"The machines are primarily being used by vending operators, not necessarily amusement game operators, although there is some overlap. Some operators are willing to deal with product (inventory) and some are not. Many amusement game operators are just used to collecting coins."

ACTIONMATIC LTD.

This Canadian company provides vending units and the capsules with prizes. Ken McPhail of Actionmatic says, "In a general mix we supply, we have 50 different items." The company prides itself on its wide variety of machines and product that goes inside. Jewelry items are doing really well, he adds.

McPhail is particularly proud of the new concentration-style


Treasure Castle by Impulse Amusements


Tri Tower Deluxe by Machine-O-Matic

maze games the company has designed in three capsule sizes: 2.3-inch, 2.6-inch, and 2.9-inch.

His best suggestions for good locations? "Where the kids are, and where there is a good traffic flow. Capsules do well in spiral machines as well as rack machines."

Actionmatic's newest machine is its *Talking Vendor* that can speak in three languages: English, French, and Spanish. It vends 1.3-inch capsules, large gum, or other one-inch items, and is equipped with the new pull-out cash drawer from Machine-O-Matic. Custom sounds are available; operators can have their own five-second record made with up to four different sayings on each side.

MACHINE-O-MATIC

The company's newest bulk vendor is the *Double Decker Northern Beaver Towers* that accommodates capsules up to three inches in diameter plus a number of other items.

Machines and the prizes can be tailored to any location. Each unit is independent with a dedicated coin mech and comes in a choice of cabinet colors.

In addition, Machine-O-Matic features an extensive line of capsule vending machines on stands as single units, doubles, triples, and large-scale configurations that can fill an entire wall. Its *Tri Tower Deluxe* unit is one of its most popular machines.

IMPULSE AMUSEMENTS

"The real market for these types of machines is in high-traffic locations," advises Jim Plescia of Impulse Amusements. The company, known for its impulse machines and scales, introduced its *Treasure Castle* capsule vending unit in 1994.

"We classify the machine as a high-capacity novelty vendor, or a take-off on the classic egg or chicken machine," he says. *Treasure Castle* features a dressed up goose that lays golden eggs; it holds 2,000 capsules instead of the 200 or 300 pieces that a standard vendor can accommodate.

"An amusement operator can place these machines with amusement games and not empty out too quickly," he informs. The machine empties out at $500 to $1,000.

Plescia feels that the classic egg machine design appeals to young kids because they like the animated character aspect. The character can be customized for the location with a pizza man or pinata inside, for example.

Vending doesn't compete with video, says Plescia. He sees an "increased demand" for these types of machines, which are built to withstand unattended operations and will still vend without electricity (the character is battery-powered).

Plescia sees this type of machine as a good crossover piece because of its high capacity. If operators want to diversify, he says, "this is a good place for them to start." ▲

CAPSULE VENDING UNIT SUPPLIERS

Following are the phone and fax numbers of the companies in the article and others that supply capsule vending units:

A & A CO./PARKWAY
Carousel Stand
(800)638-6000
fax (410)252-7137

ASHLAND MFG.
Rack capsule vendors
(800)992-1696
fax (800)232-6321

ACTIONMATIC LTD.
Talking Vendor
(800)265-VEND
fax (519)351-7304

ALLSTAR DISTRIBUTING
Tall Capsule Vendor
(514)685-1400
fax (514)685-5038

CREATIVE PRODUCTS
The Transformer
(800)201-9908
fax (602)925-6688

FUN INDUSTRIES
Fun-E-Ball, Copy Cat
(800)747-1144
fax (309)755-1684

KDK ENTERPRISES
Slimboy, Slimboy Nintendo 64
(888)535-1530
fax (954)650-4270

IMPULSE AMUSEMENTS
Treasure Castle
(800)446-7857
fax (818)504-3942

LUCKY ASSOCIATES
Lucky Ducky
(417)589-6700
fax (417)589-3031

MAYONI ENTERPRISES
Big Top Mini Pinball, Ziggy
(800)345-1183
fax (818)899-0152

NATIONAL ENTERTAINMENT TECHNOLOGIES
Officer Owl, Farmer Bear
(800)458-4116
fax (417)859-2902

NORTHWESTERN
Tri-Rise, Super 80
(800)942-1316
fax (815)942-4417

OAK MFG. CO.
Imperial Towers
(213)581-8087
fax (213)581-8699

O.K. MFG.
Toy Runner
(800)748-5480
fax (801)974-5458

P & E TECHNOLOGIES
Catch-N-Win, Whack N' Win
(908)872-9800
fax (908)872-0003

QUICK SILVER DEVELOPMENT
Iresistible Stuff
(702)888-8100
(702)888-8111

TOY 'N JOY
Talking/non-talking models
(800)Toy-'n-Joy
fax (920)739-0370

WEST COAST MFG.
Bubble Disc-Go-Round
(800)240-5256
fax (954)725-8414

OFF THE **RECORD**

Q: What is your assessment of the portion of our industry devoted to children?

A: IT'S A WHOLE DIFFERENT BALL GAME

I've been in this business for about 23 years now and have never operated any kiddie rides. It's a whole different thing than operating video, pinball, jukeboxes, pool tables, or darts. I look at kiddie rides as something that can only be placed in places just for kids. They would seem a little out of place in my locations. But not only that, I think that insurance is different for kiddie rides. Even though they don't look so dangerous, people are sometimes a little weird when it comes to children. An operator that I used to know actually was sued by someone who tripped over a cord going to a kiddie ride. Believe me, I know it could have happened to any type of game or other type of equipment that has cords, but just because it was a kiddie ride it made everything worse. He swore he wouldn't operate kiddie rides anymore, but I think it was because his insurance company made it more difficult. ▲

A: IT WAS RIGHT UNDER MY NOSE!

I don't have any locations that are designed to cater only to kids so I don't know about that aspect of a kid place. However, there are many locations that want something for kids visiting with their parents. For instance, I have several what I call little kiddie rides at a restaurant on the outskirts of town. I put them in, frankly, because they were in my warehouse and I needed the space. I already had a video game in the restaurant so I discussed adding the rides with the owner and he said to go ahead.

I literally had to blow the dust off the rides. I couldn't believe it when I went to collect. Those two rides outearned the video game by a wide margin. Thinking it was just an isolated week, I was surprised again the next week and the next when the collections were just as high or higher. But the video game revenue didn't decrease, so obviously it was new customers, not revenue going from one to the other type of equipment.

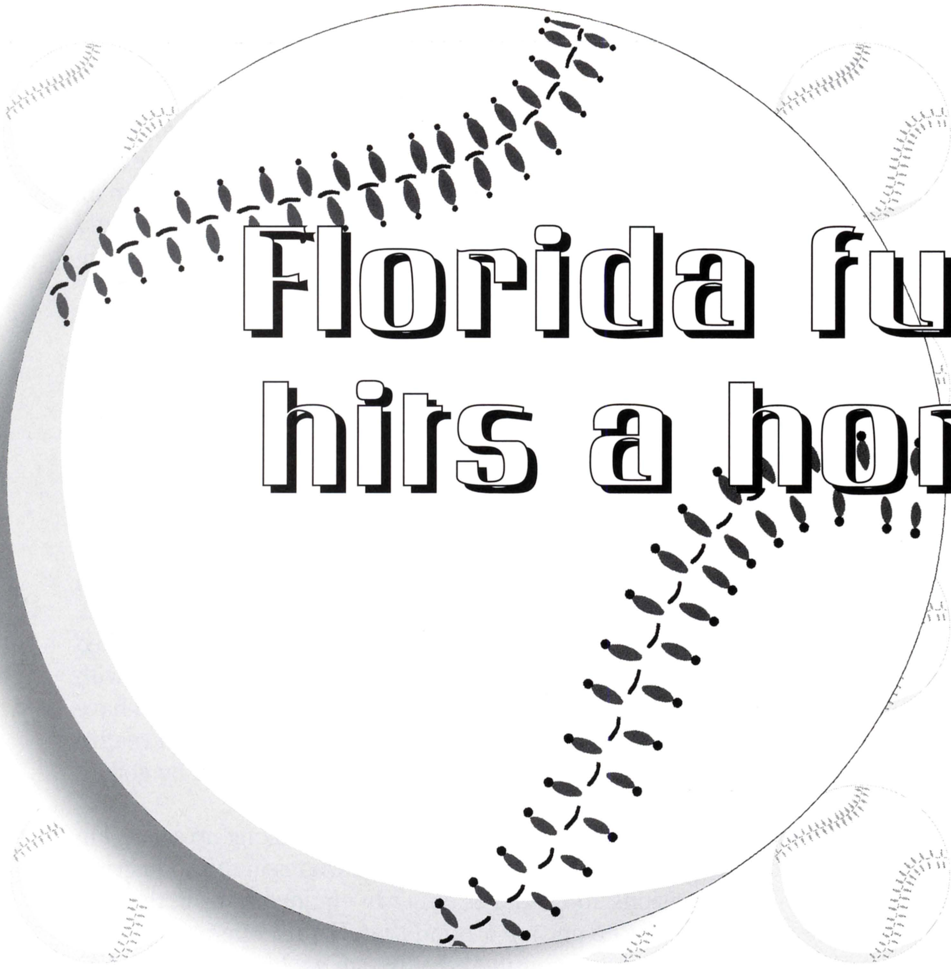
I think what I found out is that where people go and take their kids, it's not a bad idea to have something for them. I can remember how much I loved the coin-operated horse when I was a kid, and I see that same enjoyment on the faces of kids now on whatever ride they prefer. Since that experience in the restaurant, I've been giving this kiddie ride business a lot more thought. I've already talked with several of my other locations that I think might be just as successful with kiddie rides. It was a lesson for me. When I used to hear people say that you have to try new things, I thought it was a crock of you know what. But now I realize that putting those two rides in a location was a new thing for me, and by golly it worked.

I have to laugh because instead of getting rid of two rides taking up space, I'm now buying some more of them! Every single operator who is in this industry is having to make mega decisions and changes either in equipment or in the way they do business. There's just no getting around that. For us, operating kiddie rides is something we'd never even considered although we had two rides right under our noses. There are a lot of other things right under our noses that we can take advantage of as an industry. I hate to admit this, and I'm lumping myself in this group, but operators have a hard time looking beyond today or tomorrow. They get stuck in a rut and don't know that there are wide open spaces just above them. That was me all right. ▲

A: KIDDIE BUSINESS FOR EXPERTS

I don't know another way to really say this or explain my feelings, but operating equipment for little children is best kept in the hands of experts. What I mean is that it's not something to be taken up on a whim. For instance, if you operate in restaurants or malls and figure to take a kiddie ride there, it could be a mistake. When you operate games for older kids or even adults you can halfway expect them to act with a little common sense. When kids are the main customer, then you have to expect someone else to be the common sense for them. Parents can't expect to leave their kids alone for even the few minutes the ride lasts.

But then again, if you're willing to face the challenges of dealing with the unique problems and circumstances that come with operating kiddie equipment, it can be worth the effort. I have to emphasize that you must be willing to face those challenges but become an expert in developing answers. I guess you're wondering if I operate kiddie rides. I did have them at one time, but I've downsized my route and those were the most obvious to go in my situation. However, another operator in my area bought the rides from me and thanks me every time I see him for helping him get in that business. ▲



Florida fun park hits a home run

BONNIE THEARD

Multiple attractions, a guest-friendly atmosphere, and close ties with the community combine for success in the sunshine state.

"We carry a little bit of everything," says marketing and promotions director Dana Waters of Mike Greenwell's Bat-A-Ball and Family Fun Park on Pine Island Road in Cape Coral, Fla., near Ft. Myers on the Gulf of Mexico side of the state.

"Our clientele is literally from age two up to 99. We really get a good blend of customers." The facility draws 200,000 to 300,000 visitors per year.

The park is named for owner Mike Greenwell, a retired Major League baseball player who spent 13 seasons with the Boston Red Sox. The park's slogan is: Home of Major League Fun!

Greenwell hosts batting clinics for the kids using the park's eight different batting cages. His brother Buddy is the president and general manager. Together they oversee a facility they have built over six and a half years to include 19 holes of miniature golf, four go-kart tracks, kiddie bumper boats, snack bar and ice cream shop, playground, krazy kars, remote-control boats, 6,000-square-foot arcade, and the newest addition—an in-line hockey rink.

Birthday parties get special attention at Mike Greenwell's. According to Waters, "We're set up right now to do 12 birthday parties a day on the weekends counting Friday night, Saturday, and Sunday—about 30 in a weekend.

Business remains steady all year long with a good combination of locals and tourists. November through April is more the tourist season in Cape Coral. The only day Mike Greenwell's is closed is Christmas Day. Regular hours are Sunday-Thursday, 10 a.m.-10 p.m.; Friday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-midnight.

There is no admission charge or parking fee; attraction pricing is done individually. Tokens are used extensively throughout the park along with party dollars. A special token machine changes those

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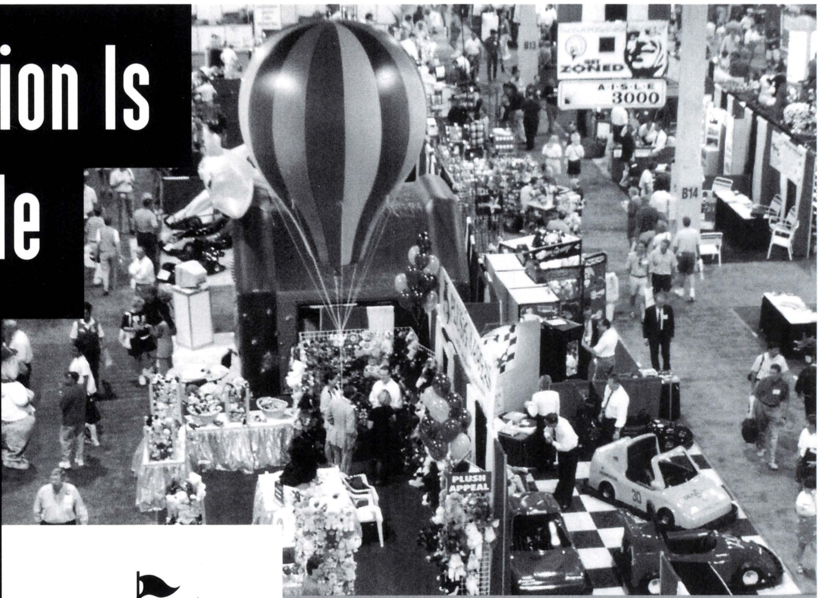

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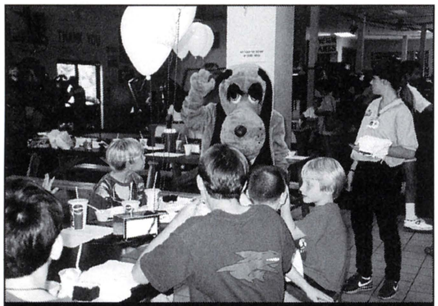
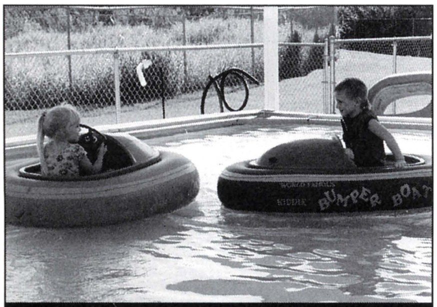
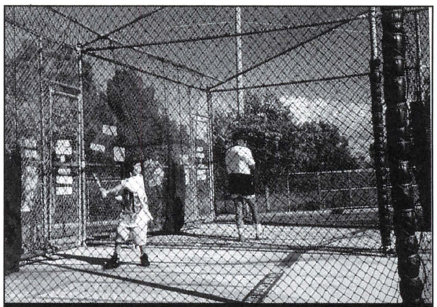

Bubbers, the mascot, makes a birthday party appearance.


Kiddie bumper boats are a really cool attraction.

A 6,000-square-foot arcade features redemption, video, and other equipment.


A future sports star practices in one of eight batting cages.

One of four go-kart tracks, the Grand National. Others are Figure 8, Slick Track, and Jr. Track.

Trick or Treat Night draws 5,000 visitors. Local sponsors pass out candy on the golf course.

"play dollars" into tokens. This has proven successful for birthday parties and any large groups.

In the arcade the games run 40 percent redemption titles and 60 percent video and other games. The redemption center has been enlarged over the years and offers all the hottest merchandise: Tommy gear, Nike, Rug Rats, South Park, Godzilla, Looney Tunes, and Disney.

"We're also into '60s and '70s retro," says Waters, "with smile face candles and lava lamps in great demand. Our redemption center caters to everyone. The small inventory (trinkets) constantly changes, except for best-sellers such as whoppie cushions and magic ink that are standard. Ticket values range from one to 4,200 tickets."

What are some other hot items? Strap necklaces are real hot right now, says Waters, and a special candy section is also popular.

The staff at Mike Greenwell's doesn't take its success for granted. To stay in close touch with customers, frequent guest surveys are conducted. For example, birthday party children are asked what they like in music, cartoons, and television, as well as their favorite color and favorite attraction at the park.

What are the most recent results? "Go-karts came out on top with the arcade a close second," answers Waters.

The park sponsors free special events such as an Easter Egg Hunt, Trick or Treat Halloween Night, and a Back-to- School Blast promoting safety. There is a charge for the Haunted Hike event that runs the last two weeks in October and features 14 to 20 different scary scenes.

Waters explains that the Trick or Treat Halloween Night, always the night before the occasion, has proven very successful with attendance figures hovering around 5,000. Twenty-two local sponsors pass out candy on the golf course. Each hole has a sponsor, such as Dominos, Denny's, McDonald's, etc.

Mike Greenwell's is conscious of its place in the community. Waters recently had lunch with the chief of police of the area, which indicates how important the facility views staying in touch with community leaders.

"Our name is out there and we stay there supporting our community," says Waters. "We are heavily involved in the Do the Right Thing and DARE programs, Kid's Fest (convention for kids), and school and sports organizations."

In addition, the fun park can be counted on for donations to local worthy causes and encourages high-caliber academics by awarding free tokens to children who have As and Bs on their report cards.

The secret to the fun park's success is threefold: active involvement in the community, continued refinement of the facility, and good management. Providing entertainment for the whole family is a challenging task, and Mike Greenwell's has met the challenge. ▲

Mike Greenwell's Family Fun Park
vital statistics

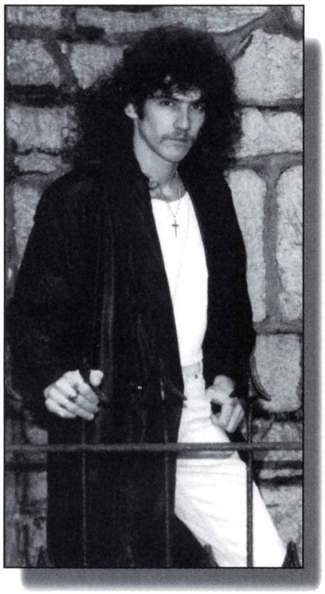
Opened: February 1992
First attractions: Batting cages, arcade, miniature golf
Annual visitors: 200,000-300,000
Favorite attractions: Go-karts, game room
Hottest prize item: Strap necklaces
Birthday parties: 30 per weekend
Newest attraction: In-line hockey rink

HELPFUL HINTS CONTESTANT

Dave Magaro Jr.
President

Magaro Machines, Inc.

Coin Operated
Amusement Machines



DEAR PLAY METER,

I'LL NEVER FORGET THE TIME A FEW YEARS AGO WHEN I **was working on a Williams *High Speed* pinball machine. The problem I was having was that it would lock up every seven to 10** games. I hate intermittent problems: if you're going to break then break you temperamental piece of *&%$#@. Anyway, I figured that the problem was more likely than not in the CPU board. I had a working *High Speed* board in the shop so I popped it in the game, played over 20 games, and had no problem whatsoever.

Now that I had the problem localized, I figured it would be a breeze to isolate the problem and fix it. I'm thinking a bad P.I.A., microprocessor, or maybe one of the game ROMs. The only chips that I had the equipment at the time to check were the TTLs and CMOs, so I started replacing these chips one at a time. The result was always the same—lockup! I started going through the TTL chips and finally did find a bad one. I replaced it, put the board back in the machine, and said a little prayer. Eight games later it locked up. I replaced or checked all of the major components on the board. The result of each new effort: lockup, after lockup, after lockup.

I went into the shop on the fourth day of this nightmare. One of the techs in the shop looked at me and said, "You look like hell. Are you all right?" I looked up at him with a weary expression and answered: "I can't eat, I can't sleep, and when it's real quiet at night I can hear sirens and the multiball theme music."

He laughed and offered to give me a hand to get it fixed. One by one all of the techs in the shop came over to help me troubleshoot. And one by one they all left me with the same tone of frustration in their voices as they walked away mumbling: "You're on your own, man."

Friday—day five of the ordeal. I started to question not only my ability, but also my sanity. I put the working board back in the game just to make sure that the problem was, in fact, in the board. Once again, I played over 20 games and had no problems. I put the suspect board back in and guess what happened? LOCKUP!

I needed to get out of the shop for awhile so I went out and did all of the service calls that came in that day. It was quitting time when I got back. I walked through the shop and nobody said a word to me. They all just stared as I reached down and turned on the pinball machine. One of the guys came up to me (I found out later he had been voted as the spokesman) and said, "You gotta do it Dave." I looked at him with daggers in my eyes and yelled, "No, not that!"

"You've just got to," he said. "There's no shame in it." I knew he was right so I reached down and turned off the machine. I bowed my head in disgrace and defeat and walked towards the door. I stopped, raised my head, and with a tear in my eye I told them, "I'll call a Williams technician on Monday!"

You probably wouldn't believe the part where I went to a bar over the weekend and met a guy named Ty Speed, would you? I didn't think so; never mind.

HELPFUL HINTS CONTESTANT

Monday morning came, and to everyone's relief I called Williams. There's a great staff with excellent technical support, so I knew that they would be able to help. My only fear was that it was going to be something simple that I had overlooked.

First, the Williams tech asked me the extremely obvious, then the merely obvious, the obvious, finally the not so obvious, moving on to the obscure, right down to the bizarre.

He said jokingly, "Maybe it's possessed" and without missing a beat I replied, "No, it's not possessed. I troubleshot it for demonic possession and it's clean." After going through everything he could think of, and me answering every question with "I already checked that twice," there was silence. Both of us were so deep in thought that we forgot we were on the phone. I finally snapped out of it and said, "Hello." He replied that he was still there but was thinking.

What he was thinking about was flying someone out if I couldn't fix it. At that point reality started setting in. I told him that wouldn't be necessary, although I appreciated the fact that they were willing to go to such lengths to help me. I told him that I would find the problem and thanked him for his time and effort. Before he hung up he made me promise that if I did find the problem to let him know what it was. Even as I assured him I would, the guilt was setting in.

I had spent way too much company time working on this one machine. I put it in my critical care section and was even more determined to fix it. For the next week all of my free time went into working on this machine. Before work, after work, and on the weekend I put my heart and soul into finding out what was wrong.

I spent so much time with the machine that the woman I was seeing at the time accused me of cheating on her. It was one night when I came in around midnight and found her waiting up for me. Here's how our conversation went:

"Where were you?" she demanded to know.

"At the shop," I answered.

"With who?"

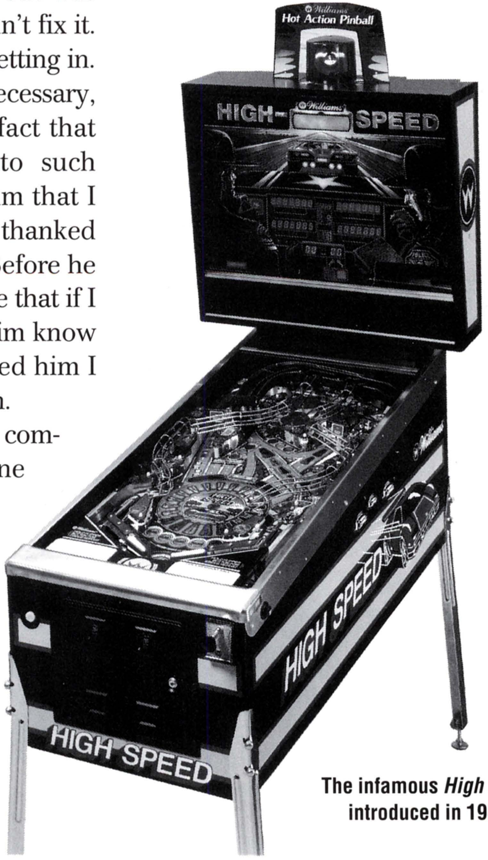
"With *High Speed*."

"You smell like perfume."

"That's just the smell a coil gives off when it energizes."

"What happened to your hand?"

"I cut it on a piece of playfield plastic."



The infamous *High Speed* introduced in 1985.

"What's that red mark on your neck?"

"Solder splash," I explained. "Look, I'm very tired, frustrated, and I'm going to bed."

Then I made a critical mistake. I took off my shirt and headed towards the bedroom. She screamed after me, "And just HOW did you get those scratches on your back, MISTER?"

I turned around, quite annoyed by this time, but tried to calmly explain that the playfield had fallen on me. "Uh, huh. And what about your chest? I guess the playfield fell on that too?" she queried, thinking she'd caught me in a lie.

Without hesitation I told her, "No, when the playfield fell on my back it drove my chest into the transformer." Hey, it could have happened. Even if it was a farfetched story, she had never seen the inside of a pinball machine. What did she want me to say anyway—I was working on the game one night, got frustrated with it, went to the bar for a beer, and hooked up with an old flame. Happy? *High Speed* was destroying my life.

Back in the shop, I finally ended up checking every single component on the board. If it did not measure exactly, and I mean EXACTLY, what it was supposed to, I replaced it. I put the board back in the machine and it worked! I tested it for weeks. Before work, after work, on weekends I played the hell out of it. I had everybody in the shop play it whenever they had free time. I brought kids in to play it and through all of this play testing it never once locked up. Finally satisfied that it was fixed, I put it on the ready line and it went out on location.

A week after life had seemingly returned to normal, I was back in the shop when our secretary came on the intercom to announce a service call. When she named the location and I

HELPFUL HINTS CONTESTANT

realized it was the one where we had taken the *High Speed*, my heart and the screwdriver I was holding hit the floor. Maybe it was just me, but I swear her voice got deeper and slower until she sounded like James Earl Jones as she said, "The *High Speed* pinball is locking up."

I fell to my knees, put my face in my hands, and screamed to no one in particular "Why, why, why?" One of the techs felt so sorry for me he volunteered to take the call. I stood up, regained my composure, and told him that he didn't have enough money to pay to take this call away from me. This was MY baby!

> ***"I was stunned. You mean I lost my woman, my confidence, my self esteem, and may sanity over a loose diode lead? Go figure."***

The location was about 45 minutes away. During the drive I rethought the problem. I was convinced that it was not the CPU board. I just took everything that happened as coincidence, but I kept asking myself, what was the one thing that was always in common when the game locked up? THE FLIPPERS! The flippers? It just had to be something to do with the flippers. But what?

When I got to the location, I opened the machine, propped up the playfield, took a screwdriver, put it under one of the diodes on the right flipper coil, and noticed that the lead was loose. I gave the screwdriver a gentle twist and the lead came right out of the diode. I was stunned. You mean I lost my woman, my confidence, my self esteem, and my sanity over a loose diode lead? Go figure. I felt like such an ass. But at least the nightmare was over.

A few years later I was president of that corporation. (It had nothing to do with the *High Speed*, trust me on that.) I walked back in the shop one day to find one of my technicians standing in front of a Williams *Grand Lizard* pinball with a familiar puzzled, frustrated look on his face. You know the look I'm talking about—the *High Speed* stare. I walked up and asked him what the problem was. He said, "I don't know. It's really weird. The game just keeps locking up for no apparent reason."

As I was lifting the playfield, he related to me that he was sure that the problem was in the main board. I propped up the playfield as he continued to tell me that he had changed the P.I.A.s, the microprocessor, the game ROMs, etc. I reached into my pocket and pulled out my pocket knife. I put it under the same diode that I had done those many years earlier with *High Speed*, and gave it a gentle twist. The lead came right out of the diode.

I looked at the tech and divulged, "There's your problem. Replace that diode and it will quit locking up." He looked at me in disbelief and I just grinned and walked away. I took about 10 steps and stopped. I thought to myself: maybe I should tell him the *High Speed* story so he doesn't feel so bad. I turned around, took a breath, and was just ready to begin my tale when I noticed that he was looking at me with such awe. He

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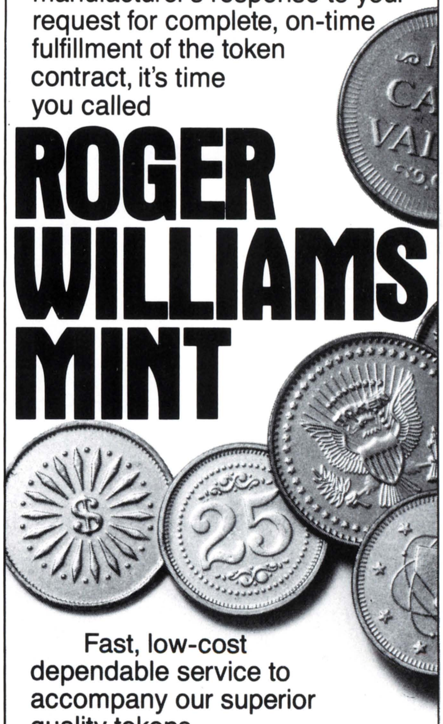

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HELPFUL HINTS CONTESTANT

was just staring at me like I was some kind of troubleshooting genius or pinball fix-it god. I figured, why burst his bubble. So I turned back around and continued walking away from him and the *Grand Lizard* machine that he will never forget. I just smiled to myself and thought, "The hell with it, let him read the book!" And that's exactly what this is turning out to be!

The morals of the story are:

1) If you have a pinball machine that is intermittently locking up (especially an older Williams) check the diodes on all of the playfield solenoids, starting with the flipper coils first.

2) Don't ever cheat on your woman. But if you do, don't try to blame it on a pinball machine. It doesn't work.

As for the *High Speed* and the *Grand Lizard*, neither machine ever locked up after we replaced the diodes.

As for me, I went on to start my own business.

As for Ty Speed, the last I heard he was "locked up" in the county jail...believe it or not! ▲

David Magaro Jr. is president of Magaro Machines Inc. in Mechanicsburg, Pa. He submitted this "helpful hint" as his entry in Play Meter's Helpful Hint Contest. You still have time. If you have a story that offers a tip for an operator's business, send it in. We think our readers will enjoy reading what operator's have to say as much as we enjoyed David's story.

EDG Entertainment opens new Bar Code and Galactic Circus

Bar Code is a new entertainment experience.

EDG Entertainment Pty. Ltd., creator and manager of the successful Bar Code concept, will open its next facility on George Street in the Planet Hollywood building in Sydney, Australia, later this year. In addition, the company has ventured into another amusement concept with Galactic Circus near Melbourne's Crown Casino.

The new Bar Code is the second location adjacent to a Planet Hollywood restaurant. This one is in Sydney's prime entertainment strip which features nightclubs, restaurants, game rooms, and theaters. The new-age gathering spot will be on two levels with a bar, pool tables, a DJ booth, dance area, and audio visual entertainment.

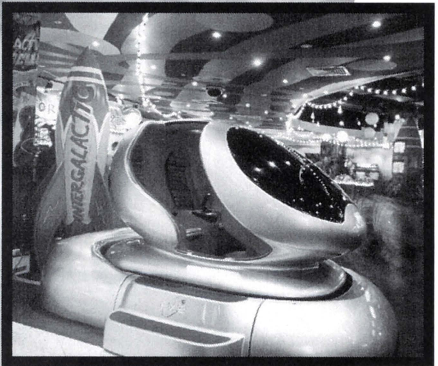
According to EDG Entertainment's managing director Gary Berman, "Bar Code is a brand new entertainment experience that combines elements of a bar, nightclub, and amusement arcade in a way not previously experienced. Our primary customer base is the 18- to 34-year-old, but Bar Code is equally attractive during the day to families and corporations due to the high-quality appointment, service, and security levels. Bar Code's presence on George Street will enhance the entertainment flavor of the area and provide an ideal venue for people to meet and have a good time."

Galactic Circus emphasizes play for prizes.

The Galactic Circus has brought the tradition of traveling carnivals to the Crown Casino locale and turned it into an attractive amusement destination. Galactic Circus provides all the activities of the traditional carnival but with a modern injection of interactive simulator games and attractions. It is all about participation, winning, and prizes. Theming is vintage circus, fun for all ages, and provides a fresh entertainment alternative.

One of the newest attractions at the Galactic Circus is the Phoenix FX2 simulator. It joins a competitive simulator environment sharing the stage with three Ventura S2s, two Voyager 5000s, and one Sega R360. Berman commented about the FX2, "We are very excited to be showcasing an attraction of this caliber. The FX2 looks fabulous and is proving to be very popular with all ages."

EDG Entertainment Pty. Ltd. is based in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, +61-3-9867-6100; fax +613–9867-4666. ▲



The Phoenix FX2 debuted at Galactic Circus.

An intensive day in GEORGIA

Over 150 Georgia operators met at Dave & Buster's in an Atlanta suburb for an intense seminar on master licenses and operating noncash video redemption games in the state and an awards dinner honoring an impressive array of state officials and guest speakers. The Georgia Amusement Machine Operators Association's attorney, Les Schneider, pulled double duty as the speaker during the five-hour session and as the master of ceremonies during the awards dinner that evening. Schneider is a partner in the law firm of Wimberly & Lawson and has served as legal counsel for GAMOA since 1978.

The seminar was geared toward educating operators on the changes in Georgia law on noncash redemption, which became effective on July 1. Also included was a segment on gaining a better comprehension of the procedures for the master license/sticker system, pool table law, occupation taxes, personal property taxes, and a demonstration of equipment.

Nearly all Georgia operators operate noncash redemption machines in the form of 8-liners and video poker games. Schneider noted, "Georgia has the clearest law that will stand the test of time." He emphasized that the laws concerning this equipment can easily come under attack, not because they are legally flawed but from lack of cooperation from operators. With noncash redemption there are

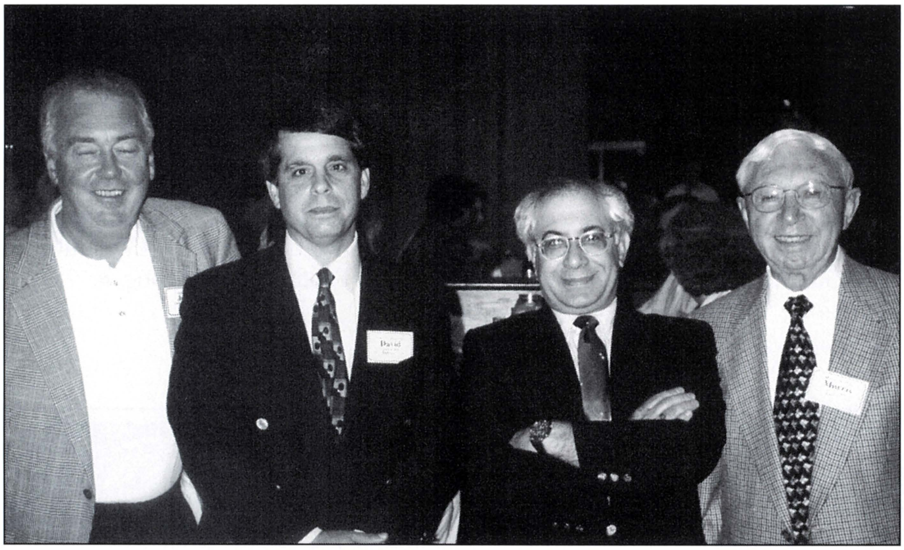
GAMOA president Steve Bodenstein with two lovely ladies, Nancy of Collins Music (l) and Debby of Greater Southern.

Georgia lottery president Rebecca Paul was the keynote speaker.

GAMOA president Steve Bodenstein (far left) with a happy group of award-winning operators.

absolutely no exceptions to the rule of never paying out in cash. There was even some discussion about prizes in the way of gift certificates from stores that allow the certificates to be cashed in, and whether lottery tickets could be used as prizes.

Schneider said that the reason noncash merchandising has become such an essential part of the industry is the fact that people can play amusement games in their homes by simply buying a cartridge. "Without merchandising, this industry dies," he stressed. But, he added, the industry is adamantly against the paying of any money for the playing of any machine.



From left: Sega's John Hill, Greater Southern's David Capilouto, GAMOA president Steve Bodenstein, and Greater Southern's Morris Piha.

There was an intense discussion of skill versus chance. Schneider explained that a machine that involves NO SKILL is a gambling device. He told the group that if a player pushes a button on the machine and does nothing more for a chance to win that won't work. Machines must have skill stop buttons and those buttons must work. He added that even a pinball machine with no flippers would be considered illegal because the player had no part in the outcome. In looking over the very clear and concise official wording that covers all bases concerning skill, Schneider quipped, "We squeezed all the juice out of that lemon!"

An important factor in successful noncash redemption is the prize. The limit on the value of any prize is $5 wholesale. Schneider's advice, "Never give anything away as prizes that you can't prove the purchase price." Players can only receive one ticket PER PLAY no matter what the accumulated points. Schneider answered questions concerning this. Players can accumulate free replays but never, under any circumstances can they be reimbursed in cash for those points. In fact, it is illegal to have a knock-off switch on the machine, which brings up another warning. If any person gives another person money for free replays he will be guilty of a misdemeanor, and if caught doing it more than once it will be a felony.

Schneider cautioned the group about their equipment. He said that law enforcement has a lack of understanding about noncash redemption machines and will seize first and ask questions later. For example, since the law requires skill-stops on 8-liners, the buttons should be properly labeled. "Labeling matters," Schneider said, "If they see words they've always associated with gambling, they'll think it's a gambling machine."

Schneider told the group that while Georgia is practically free of outright prohibition against the amusement machines, it occasionally still has to contend with excessively high local business fees, unnecessary limitations on the machines where alcohol is served, and unduly burdensome requirements relating to zoning and other special use permits.

MASTER LICENSE

Georgia requires operators to buy a master license in lieu of paying taxes on gross receipts as is done in many other states. They must affix the proper stickers on their machines or suffer a $150 fine for each improper use. Schneider suggested that some machines that allow two players to play simultaneously could need two stickers even though the law clearly states "per machine."

Many operators have complained about the lack of enforcement for unlicensed machines even when reported. However, Schneider assured the group that after July 1, enforcement will be strict. He said that the state has been impressed with the number of operators applying for a master license, adding that the number surpassed the expectations. He said there will be zero tolerance for violators. He said that the first year that the master license law took effect 250 businesses were "discovered" when the state cross referenced the state tax returns and master license applications.

Schneider said the master license program has been so successful he's received phone calls from many other states wanting to know more.

OTHER CONCERNS

Schneider said that it took nearly five years to achieve a legislative victory to replace the antiquated law governing the use of pool tables in Georgia. "Pool is alive and well," he said. He also discussed operators' obligation to issue a 1099 form to their locations; proper reporting for occupation tax, permit, license, and regulatory fees; encouraged operators to send in their jukebox registration fees; and demonstrated a number of machines.

AWARDS DINNER

The keynote speaker was Rebecca Paul, president of the Georgia Lottery Corp. Special honorees included Sen. Steve Henson, Rep. Alan Powell, and Rep. Roy Barnes, who is the Democratic candidate for governor.

Paul began by telling the audience that the first lottery could be traced back to 1539 in Italy. By 1964, 37 states had started lotteries. In Georgia the lottery profits are earmarked for education. But unlike other states, no money is taken from the general fund that was previously used for education. She said, "The lottery is the best thing that ever happened to Georgia." She illustrated this by pointing out that the lottery funds are used to finance the Hope Scholarship program, designed to help put people through college. "In Georgia," she said, "97 percent of college freshman are attending school on the Hope Scholarship program."

While it has been controversial, Paul said she is not opposed to giving lottery tickets as prizes for noncash redemption. However, it's an issue that will have to be addressed further.

The first Straight Shooter Award was presented to Chet Brian, the director of the department of Revenue. Schneider praised his efforts on the association's behalf, saying, "Before Chet, the department was frozen by indecision. He has turned weaknesses into strengths. He is an example of the positive things that can happen when the regulated and the regulators have some common goals."

Several years ago Schneider was surprised with a special award presented by the GAMOA members, and since that time has presented the Les Schneider Award to other deserving people. This time it was presented to Rep. Barnes, who Schneider called, "a friendly, bright man of vision."

Awards were also presented to Sen. Henson, described as, "always there to help; he got the industry through some of its darkest hours," and Rep. Powell, "who set a place at the table when it came to the fate of our industry."

They were also presented with Harley-Davidson jackets courtesy of Sega of America and framed pinball backglasses presented by David Capilouto of Greater Southern Distributing. ▲

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WIDTH: 37½" (95.3 cm)
HEIGHT: 72" (183 cm)
SHIPPING
WEIGHT: 11' 650# (295 kg),
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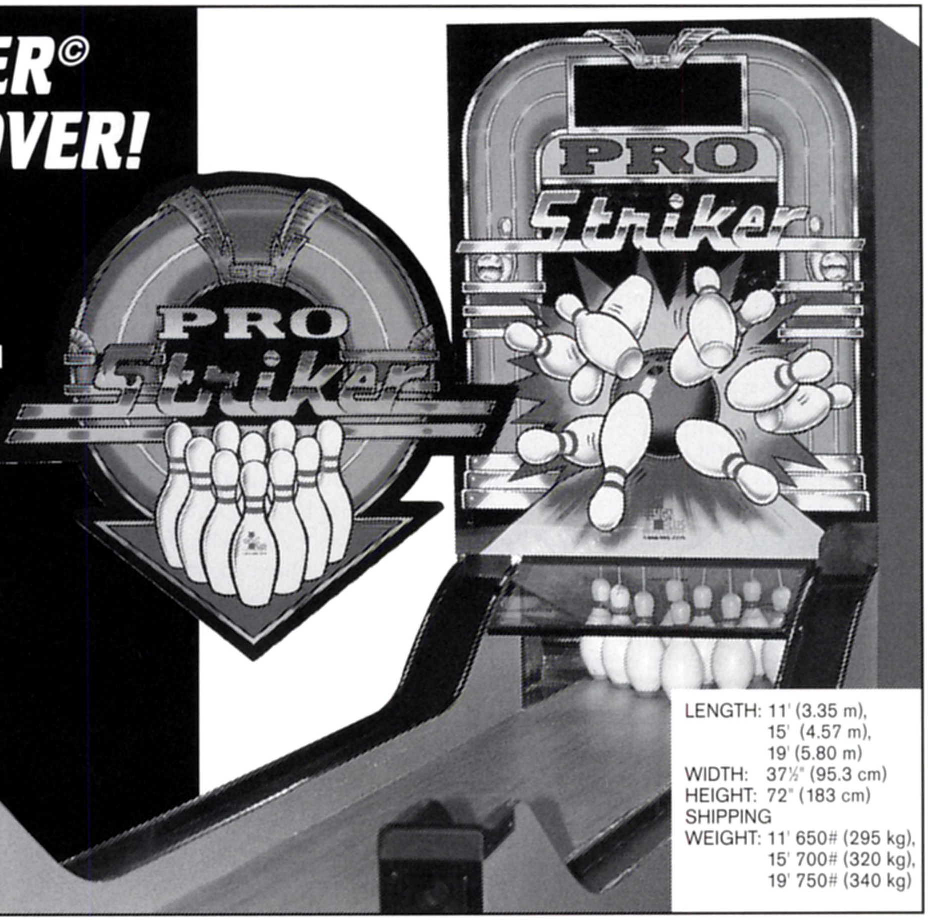


Atari launches RADICAL product in Texas

Something fresh and different, that's the consensus of opinion from a group of distributors who got to play Radikal Bikers for the first time.

"Call it *Paper Boy* meets *720 Degrees*," said Paula Russell of Southland Distributing in Lafayette, La., when she laid eyes on Atari's newest video, *Radikal Bikers.* The game was officially launched at a distributor meeting in Dallas, Texas, June 2 at the Four Seasons Resort and Club.

Atari staff welcomed the distributors to an afternoon of new products, not only a chance to play *Radikal Bikers* but also an opportunity for a sneak preview of five other games slated for the fall. The day's agenda included a lunch of pizzas, calzones, and ravioli in keeping with the theme of *Radikal Bikers*–a pizza delivery race through a madcap city.

THE GAME

It's a fantasy come true: deliver pizza taking shortcuts and literally kicking obstacles out the way as you do anything and everything to get your pizza there on time.

Mary Fugihara, vice president of marketing, said, "We've heard a lot about the lack of variety and affordable pricing. We want to address those issues. *Radikal Bikers* smelled good to us from the get go. It has the formula for success: easy to learn but hard to master, and it appeals to everyone."

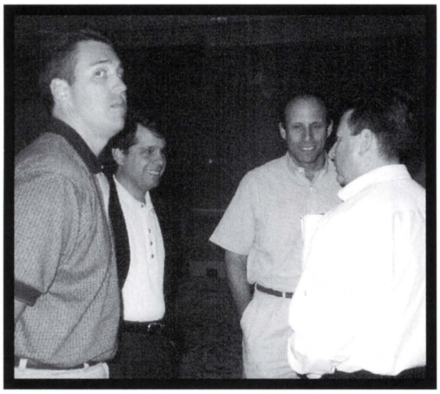
Senior product manager Derryl DePriest commented, "We want to rebuild the player base that's gradually

RadiKaL
BIKERS
ATARI

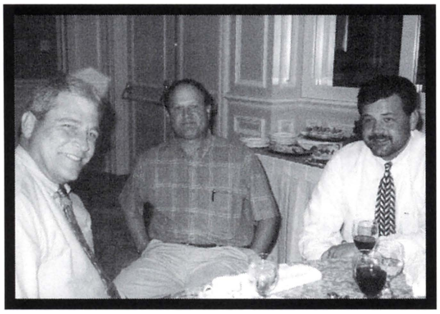
Ira Bettelman of C.A. Robinson samples game play.

The Atari gang, (l-r): Derryl DePriest, Jackie Sherman, Mary Fujihara, Mike Taylor, and Tom Keil.

From left: Kevin Jordan of Nickels & Dimes, David Capilouto of Greater Southern, Craig Singer of Nickels & Dimes, and David Roberts of Nickels & Dimes.



From left: Doug Valentino of SunBelt/Irving, Texas; Joe Franz of H.A. Franz/Houston; and Brian Gorsich of SunBelt/Oklahoma City.



Elaine Shirley of Atari and Don Waters of Mountain Coin/Phoenix go over some papers.

grown tired of the same kinds of games being introduced year after year."

The game's objectives are very clear: defeat a rival biker delivering pizza and go to the next level or circuit. Players travel by moped through the city (sometimes assisted by rockets on the vehicle), past cruise ships in the harbor, around roadblocks and construction barriers, and even through graveyards. There are 21 shortcuts and five powerups for extra time, bonus points, and wild card. The game also tells you how to improve the next time.

There are three routes to choose from: light, medium, and spicy hot. The game is housed in a splashy upright cabinet with wild graphics, custom handlebar controller for accelerating and braking, and 25-inch standard resolution monitor.

A pizza box sign is available to place on top of the cabinet as a finishing touch. Two games can be linked together for competitive fun; games are shipped link-ready for two units. Operator options include adjustable settings for standard features plus difficulty and attraction music, and there is a full complement of bookkeeping. The game was developed by the Spanish company Gaelco using its custom 3D hardware.

Fujihara said Atari sees the game as a "long-term piece like a driver, and we anticipate long-term earnings." Vice president of sales Mike Taylor added, "*Radikal Bikers* has similar strengths to a driver, the same feel and pleasure, but it draws any type of player. We've priced it competitively and feel we have a good marketing window."

Production started June 8 with informative mailers sent to operators June 15.

UPCOMING PRODUCT

A slide presentation showed a fall lineup of diverse games:

Vapor TRX–a flight simulator designed to appeal to all types of players.

Site 4–a target range simulation gun game that takes place below a legendary base.

Tenth Degree–a fighting game with lots of combos and specials.

WAR–a new genre gun game that can link up to eight players. The action takes place in surreal worlds with interesting characters stalking each other through a Russian military base. The promo cautioned, "Prepare for war; it's going to get intense."

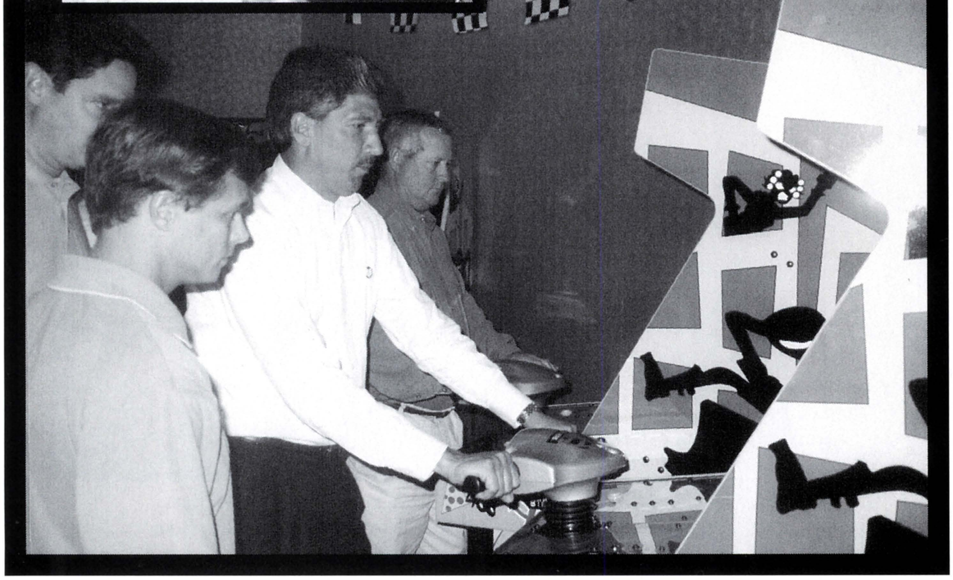
Gauntlet 3D–yes, a sequel to the 1985 hit multiple player cooperative strategy game. The story line is compelling; one to four players can take part in the adventure. If David Duchovny of "The X-Files" is the thinking woman's hunk, then *Gauntlet 3D* is the thinking player's salvation.

REACTIONS

Kevin Jordan of Nickels & Dimes is looking forward to *Gauntlet 3D*: "The question is whether or not the player is still out there. Hopefully they are there waiting for something. *Gauntlet* draws a specialized player. For the last seven to eight years we've had fighting, driving, and gun games. *Gauntlet* is a brain game, a thinking game. Are these players willing to come back?"

"*Radikal Bikers* is an interesting game," said Len Keywood of Starburst in Toronto. "We have a lot of pizza locations in Toronto. This is different from the product that we've tradition-

Bob Boals of Betson Enterprises/Carlstadt, N.J., and Arthur Gage of H.A. Franz/Houston get into the game as others look on.



ally seen."

Arthur Gage of H.A. Franz/Houston commented, "It's fun to play, its cute like *Surf Planet.* We need something new. This has got its place in skating rinks and pizza parlors. In the Houston market we have mostly bar locations."

"They have a good lineup," said Brian Gorsich of SunBelt/Oklahoma City. "I'm interested in *Site 4* and *Vapor TRX*, which looked like a Space Age *Rush the Rock.* You can't go wrong with a driver/shooter combo. I still have guys doing well with old *RoadBlasters.*"

Don Waters of Mountain Coin/Phoenix, said, "Only time will tell. There are a lot of pizza chains, and it really looks like that type of game will go into those locations. It's refreshing to see something just a little bit different. For example, *NFL Blitz* was a breath of fresh air. I think we're going to see more different games like *Radikal Bikers.*" ▲

The next generation looks at product

Hal Lieberman of Lieberman Music (Minnesota): "There is a lot of good variety coming up. I think *Radikal Bikers* will be a good kids' game."

Scott Shaffer of Shaffer Distributing (Ohio): "I'm a tradition freak, and I like the old games, so I'm interested in *Gauntlet 3D.* I'm waiting for an updated *Galaga.*"

Jon W. Brady of Brady Distributing (North Carolina): "I like the adventure perspective of *WAR.* It's similar to Doom, the consumer game that's done very well."

Steve Toranto of Birmingham Vending (Alabama): "I like *Radikal Bikers.* It's unique and a different kind of piece to put in a location. Only so many fighting games and gun games can fit into a place."

Jonathan Kleiman of Pioneer Sales & Service (Wisconsin): "*Vapor TRX* looks appealing, and the gun game should do well. *Radikal Bikers* is a good choice for locations where you don't have room for a sit-down driver." ▲

From left: Hal Lieberman, Scott Shaffer, Jon W. Brady, Steve Toranto, and Jonathan Kleiman.

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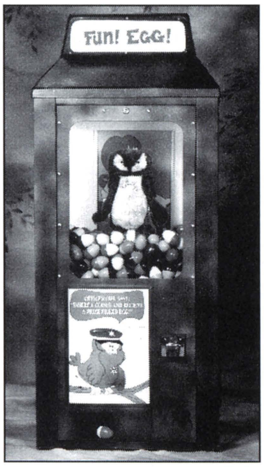

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OPEN HOUSE

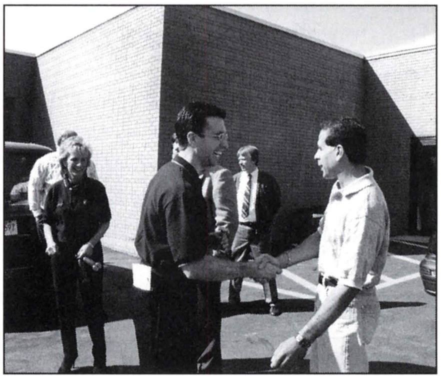
Grand opening at Betson N.Y.

Operators from the Rochester, N.Y., area gathered recently for the grand opening of the new Betson Enterprises office in Penfield, N.Y. Games, food, door prizes, and entertainment were part of the celebration.

General manager Matt Tarantelli and his staff greeted 180 visitors, including manufacturer representatives, who came by for the occasion. The new facility features 5,000 square feet of space for the distributorship's showroom, parts and service department, warehouse, and administrative offices.

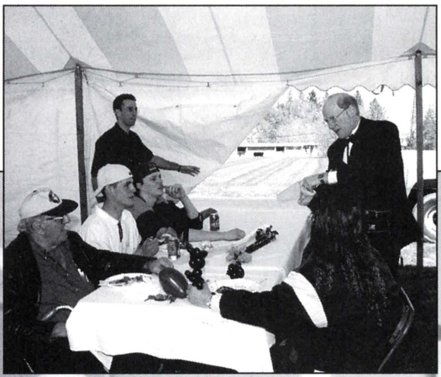
Tarantelli commented, "With the opening of the new facility in the Rochester area it assures that Betson will maintain a presence in the western part of the state." Betson has signed an extended lease at the new location. ▲

Betson employees, (l-r): Brian Sargeant, Jason Markham, Matt Tarantelli, Mary Beth Artuso, and Steve Wiesner.

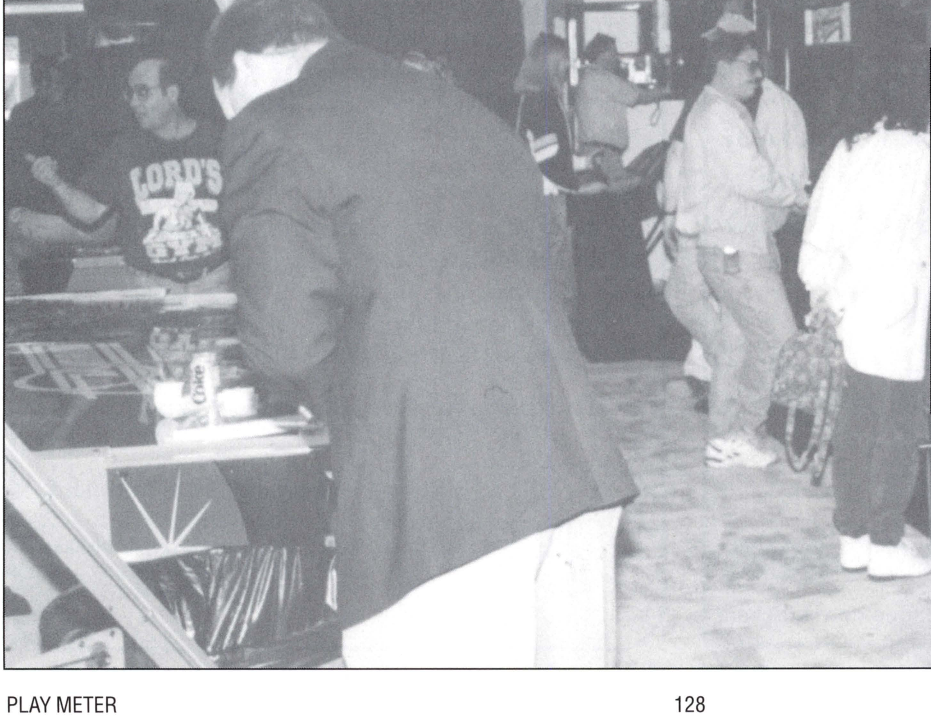


Matt Tarantelli (l) and Ozzie Williams of Coin-Op Amusements shake hands at the office entrance.

Enjoying the food, at left, Mick White of Dynamo Ltd. and John Nelson of Astro Distributing; at right, Jim Belt of Konami of America and Greg Kania of ICE.



An entertainer from Just Clowning Around mystified children and adults alike.



Games on free play included *Hyperdrive* by Midway, *Lost World: Jurassic Park* by Sega, and *California Speed* by Atari.

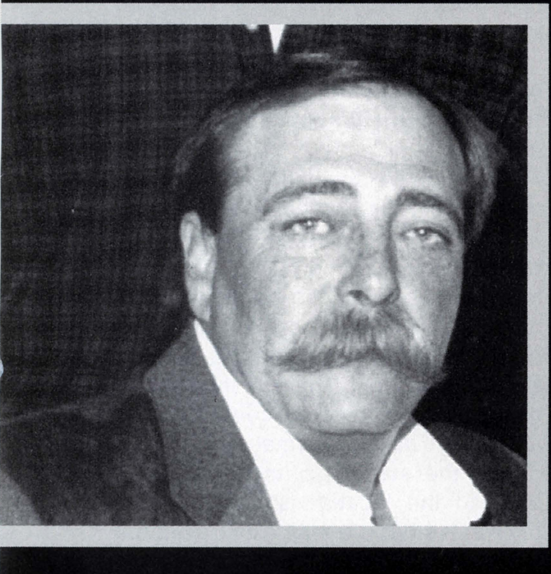
Coinman

LEE JENKINS

Lee Jenkins called the office to request an additional subscription be sent to one of his company's other offices. We talked for awhile about the industry in general. He was recently elected to the Amusement and Music Operators Association's board of directors and he attended the board meeting in Puerto Villarta, Mexico, in March. I was impressed with his take on a number of things, and decided that I wanted to hear more about his years in the business, his views on an array of topics, and why he had decided to become so active in AMOA.

A brief history on Lee's industry experience starts in 1968 when his father Ted purchased Chipp Music and Vending, a company which had been in business since the 1940s, and changed the name to Jenkins Music and Vending. I asked Lee how he felt about his dad getting into the coin machine industry, but since he was still in high school at the time he reminded me that his thoughts were mainly on cars and girls! But that changed in 1990 when he joined the company full-time after trying a career in flying that he realized wasn't right for him. He said that when he saw how hard it was to earn a dollar, he appreciated that this was a pretty good operation.

Jenkins Music and Vending is a family-owned business, consisting of Ted and his five sons: Lee, Darrell, Pat, Bob, and Bill, with offices in Wyoming and Utah. Lee, your comments didn't disappoint, and I'm glad to share them with our readers.



Was your father involved in AMOA?
No, being unaware of many of the AMOA programs, I'm not sure we saw any benefit in it until 1990 when I came on board and we started leagues. Prior to that we had quite a large number of what some people may call gray area machines in Wyoming, but in the early '90s they started disappearing. The main reason we joined AMOA was to become members of the National Dart Association. That was a benefit we could see right off the bat. We had to be a member of AMOA to become a member of NDA, so that's what we did.

Why did you become a member of the board of directors?
Actually, the reason I wanted to be on the board is to take even more interest in the NDA. Leagues are very important to our company. That's what I'd consider as my reason for wanting to be involved.

What do you hope to contribute to AMOA as a board member?
I want to help expand NDA. My exposure to AMOA has only been the board meeting in Mexico. There's still a lot of areas where AMOA is involved that I am unfamiliar with, but I hope to improve that. One program I'm anxious to take part in is the Notre Dame Education Seminar. I've heard positive things about it.

–by Valerie Cognevich

Coinman

LEE JENKINS

One observation I made at the meeting was that we spent way over our allotted time trying to define who we are as an association. We discussed ways to get the get non-typical street operators to join and to do more things to make them feel better represented through our organization. There were no decisions, but I know we'll be going after these people. We're all in the same industry—entertainment, no matter where or what we operate. Personally, I always thought that we were all in the same boat already. And since we are, AMOA wants to do more to attract them.

I'm also the president of the Amusement and Music Operators of Wyoming. And I can say that even though we're competitors and bump heads on the route here and there, we've found one common goal and that's an annual state pool and dart tournament. During our meetings, it's a time to come together and the competition seems to disappear. We know that the strength of working together helps us all even though 10 minutes later we may be arguing about something!.

I wasn't going to focus on AMOA, but since you're new to the board it was natural to ask about it. But I'd like to find out if you would define yourself as a street operator and if so, what are your major concerns?

I most definitely consider myself a street operator. When we first became involved in this business the backbone of the industry was bar locations. Then came *Pong* and *Space Invaders* and we had a good boom but that seems to be waning. We've had to focus more on the basics.

The biggest problem we see in our bar locations, which are our bread and butter, is states trying to cut down on drinking and the social unacceptability of drinking. More and more employers are randomly checking for alcohol and drugs. We are surrounded by coal and trona mines, and the workers are subject to these random tests. In the old days, these workers would get off work, stop in the bar, and have a few drinks before going home. Now they aren't allowed to do that. They have to wait for their days off so they don't go to work with traces of alcohol. We've lost a lot of the people who were casually going into the bars.

What have you done to get them back into the bars?

We have scheduled leagues, both pool and darts. We can actually guarantee a bar owner that with our league program people will be coming into their location.

"The price increases haven't kept up with the price of the product."

Has it been as successful as you'd hoped?

Yes, maybe even more than we'd hoped for. Leagues have replaced everything we used to make on gray area games. We are highly dedicated to NDA and the Valley National Eight-Ball Association (VNEA).

So the problem with the bars was not necessarily the lack of good equipment, but the fact that people weren't coming in as often for other reasons. What do you think about the equipment available to street operators?

I feel there is an abundance of equipment for us. We purchased the first 60 Merit *Scorpion DX* boards when they were available to the public. That system features paperless leagues. Teams don't have to keep score; everything's entered right on the computer in the machine. Then later in the evening the machine dials your office computer and downloads all the information. Then we create the standings and send them back to the location strictly by telephone. It's been a major improvement for us. Right now we operate leagues in five cities. With the distances out here our range for league activities is over 300 miles. So this particular machine has made it a lot handier for getting stats in and out.

The players really enjoy not having to keep track of any scores, not doing anything actually. With these machines if you simply know your name you can play. It names the person playing. The

The Jenkins family, (l-r): Bob, Ted, Pat, Betty, Bill, Darrell, and Lee.

best part is that you don't have to know a thing about computers. You simply arrive on the scene, enter your team number, and it brings up menus to select the team players that are there for the evening. You don't need to know much more than how to read.

Do you feel that league programs can be used by just about any operator?

I've been in this business long enough to know that everyone has certain problems with their locations. Maybe you didn't get them that new jukebox they wanted or they're upset about something else. But when we started leagues, I never would have believed the loyalty we got from our locations. Before we started with leagues there were several bars that didn't have our equipment. But when we had the leagues up and running and they saw how we were bringing customers into other locations, they went with us and never looked back. If you can develop a league program, and yes it is a lot of work, you'll see a different relationship develop with your existing locations and new ones.

Were you a little reluctant about devoting the manpower to a league program at first?

Yes, we had some doubts. But we did become involved to get ahead of the competition around here. We saw it as a way to get our equipment in the locations. After about a year, it proved out. I wouldn't know what to say to those who don't think they need leagues, except that it's worked for us. Certainly, if we didn't need to do something at this point in time maybe we wouldn't have put out the effort either. But the conditions in the industry made it obvious that we had to do something. Remember those locations I mentioned earlier? We had worked 20 years to get into some of them. And within a year of starting our league programs, we had all of them.

When you talk of street locations you think of jukeboxes. Do you operate a lot of them?

Yes. Every bar has basically the same equipment: a dart machine, pool table, and jukebox. I think the digitally downloaded music concept would be handy. But only if we can get it where we're not paying per selection per play. In this business an operator likes to keep what he does private. And that's the only thing I see that operators may not like. If someone is going to have access to every quarter, every song, every piece of music you've ever gained on every jukebox I think it would be hell. But if they allow you to pay a location fee every year and keep it that way to protect proprietary information on that location, I think it will be a boon. It would be a lot easier to download music and have it available instead of changing CDs, buying new jukeboxes and CD players that break, and the maintenance involved. Right now we buy CDs that have maybe one or two hits and the rest of the CD is there taking up space.

> **"We have a very good relationship with our distributors. And it's important."**

Operators are protective about coin drop figures both for themselves and the location. I don't want my business open to whoever has access to that information. You don't know how it's protected. Maybe a competitor will have access to some of the information. Operators can't take a chance on having their books open to uninvolved outside sources.

Have you signed up to take some of the first ones that will be out soon?

No. But I've had some long talks with fellow board member Lee Wesson. He has just become president of a new publicly traded NASDAQ company, DVD Technologies Inc. They have licensed from Software Communications Systems their patent rights for video music on hard drive. The first funding of the company has been completed. DVD's current business plans call for music exchange to be done by DVD disc and at a later date satellite. The box will have space for 600 audio/video titles and 1,000 audio-only titles. Lee says that current price projections see the DVD unit, full of music, in place for less than a CD jukebox alone (without music) currently costs. Pricing of replacement music will be a third of the cost of current technology. The new selections will be paid for one time per box.

This brings up another little point about AMOA. You met Lee and felt perfectly comfortable calling him and discussing digital music. Do you see this as another benefit of belonging to AMOA?

Certainly. Other than NDA, the networking and business contacts within AMOA were on my list of reasons for joining. There are a lot of great people with good information. And they seem to be willing to share their information. We're all far enough away from each other so we're not worried about giving away tricks of the trade. We get into a lot of after hours conversations and there's a lot to be gained from the experiences of others.

Do you use contracts in your locations?

There were times when we felt like we needed to smooth over an owner and get him a piece of equipment he wanted that we felt would be a marginal money maker so a contract may have been needed. But we only have about three contracts out of 60 locations. We've just found that the way our father always did business by your word and a handshake works. With contracts, maybe you could go to court, fight it, and maybe you'd win. But you could spend a lot of money and time and it's really a toss up who's going to win anyway. We have a pretty good track record and we have good relationships with our locations.

Have you gone to a larger commission split than the traditional 50/50?

Basically most of our bar locations are 50/50. In game rooms we've gone to

Coinman

LEE JENKINS

60/40 in our favor. The reason is that the damn video games cost so much that we have to try harder to recoup our money faster because we know that it'll be out for the home in what seems like a matter of weeks.

Are home games a major problem for you?

It is to a point. But I feel that if operators could band together and buy games from a company that promises not to produce a game for the home for a least a year, I know we'd jump at the chance to do that. Of course, the home version is not like sitting at a dedicated driving game but it does affect our market. The kids will play at home and it will affect us. I for one would stand by a company that thought of operators for a change. But you can look at it a different way. The reason they sell to the home is because the game isn't doing very well in coin-op. Some games are doing excellent like *Cruis'n* and *Golden Tee Golf*. We've done great with both of those games.

Have you spent a lot of money on games that haven't done well at all?

We have in the past, but our distributors are now more willing to let us try them for 30 days before we buy.

You must have a good relationship with your distributors. How important is that to you?

We have a very good relationship with our distributors. And it's important. If they are willing to give you a little time to try a game it takes away a lot of that unknown risk. After 30 days, you pretty well guarantee yourself that it's going to do OK. It takes the gamble out of your decisions. I guess that's been a good policy for the distributor because they don't want you to get stuck with games that don't work out. They have a vested interest in operators. They want them to make money so they can buy more equipment.

In some of our outlying cities where we have equipment we don't have a technician. We may have a collector with a set of keys but he's not going to repair games. This is where our distributor plays another important role. He'll send us an advance replacement for boards, bill acceptors, etc. We send the old one back, and he sends us a bill. I call it our version of plug-and-play. We rely on our distributors quite a bit for this, probably more than average. And they are good about keeping us appraised of new trends in the industry.

Since you've operated in bars for so many years do you see a difference in people and locations themselves since your dad first started?

You still have your bars that open at seven in the morning with the die-hard drinkers, but that's not the norm anymore. Now people aren't stopping in after work for a couple of hours. They have decreased their hours. With DWI laws and employers cracking down, people just can't afford to sit in the bar drinking for several hours.

> **"It's a lot easier to sell a location when you can promise them a program that will guarantee customers."**

Here in Wyoming we have a problem where police forces can't be bothered to investigate things like video game break-ins. There's too much of an investment in time and resources for little reward. However, they know that for every $1,000 they can get from a DWI driver is helping to fund their jobs. Come evening, they'll be parked down the street from bars, and it's as easy as turning their lights on for the next car coming out of the place.

This is where the leagues come in. People who don't drop by the bar for several beers anymore will stop in to play pool or darts. If they're on a league, they'll stop to practice for league night. In other words, the bars are offering their customers a reason to stop in besides drinking.

Are locations doing other things to make up for fewer customers?

One thing I've seen is sports bars especially offering some sort of food service. Our best bars cater to sports people and serve food, as a bar and grill type of thing. They are very aware of keeping sober, and a little food goes along with that. Also people can stop by for something to eat and don't even have to drink. If a location is known as a place where people can stop for a bite to eat, they might be left alone a little more than the skid row, downtown, heavy drinker type of bar.

Has your dad ever made comments about how things have changed.

Oh yes, when it comes to prices! He'll say, "Damn, we used to be able to go to Salt Lake and get a jukebox for $500!" Then he'll point out that now by the time we set a jukebox up in a location we're in it for $8,000 including the CDs and speakers. It used to be 10 cents a song and now we're four for $1. The price increases haven't kept up with the price of the product. And I've heard that before from others.

Vending has changed dramatically for us. My father used to have a lot of vending. But now with convenience stores on every corner, people don't tend to stop in a spot and get a candy bar or a drink from a vending machine. We still do some vending, but from what would have been a route of 60 candy machines in the 1970s is now zero candy machines. We operate cigarette machines in most of our bar locations. They are only legal in age-restricted locations like bars. I've certainly been keeping up with the legislative activity. It would affect our business, and we'd stand to lose if they are banned. Our locations would lose too.

Are you doing anything that is a little different?

We cover 305,000 miles with Wal-Mart stores. We have kiddie rides, video games, play-til-you-win cranes, and some plush cranes. Since we operate games in such a large area, we take care of the service calls by flying there. We also fly to some of our locations when we have technical problems.

How is the kiddie ride portion of your business?

Kiddie rides do very well. They seem to go forever and there's a good return. Parents just can't refuse that quarter for a ride. A lot of kids get on the kiddie rides before they leave the store. My father didn't operate kiddie rides; this is fairly recent. We acquired our first Wal-Mart in 1990. We were the first operator in their stores out here. But we're starting to pull out of large chain stores because it's tough.

You have a 10-day contract which is a rough way to do business. Plus it used to be that they wanted new equipment when they opened. Now they have a new policy demanding a headliner game like *Cruis'n* or *Tekken* every six months. But it's just not feasible in this part of the country where the largest city is only 50,000 people. It's almost not worth it for us.

They don't seem to understand that we start by giving them half the money, now we're having to invest in games we won't be able to pay for. It seems like they cut you to below the minimum. What works in New York City does not necessarily work out here.

Are there any particular kiddie rides that do better than others?

It's funny, but the horse that's probably the same one you and I saw when we were kids is still the most popular. Kids also like the Wal-Mart semi truck.

What do you see as the future of this industry?

With technology available in the future that would allow a bar owner to put in a digitally downloaded jukebox, it could be bad for us as operators. But even if the locations did something like that without us, we'd still be called upon to keep it running for them. I have a difficult time envisioning a time when you can get every song in the world through a phone line, and it not being bad for operators.

But on the positive side, I'm a diehard league guy. As long as we can produce a program that will bring people into bars, we're still going to have the upper hand. To me a league program is arranging social activities for our bars so they can produce customers. It's a lot easier to sell a location when you can promise them a program that will guarantee customers. It's easier than it was when all you could promise was to keep machines running for them!

We had a town 120 miles away that had a good league operator, but he sold

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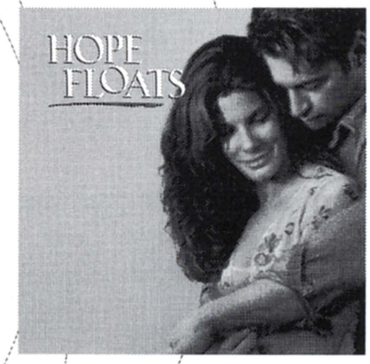
deana CARTER
sheryl CROW
lyle LOVETT
the MAVERICKS
lila McCANN
jonell MOSSER
the ROLLING STONES
bob SEGER & martina McBRIDE
gillian WELCH
WHISKEYTOWN
trisha YEARWOOD



From a film filled with hope comes a soundtrack filled with heart.

* "To Make You Feel My Love" the new single from Garth Brooks is also available on his box set "The Limited Series."

Executive Soundtrack Producers: Don Was and Forest Whitaker
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his business to another fellow who was really more into pull tabs and bingo supplies. The four top locations in that area called and wanted us to run the leagues. It was that important to them. That's what I'd say to operators who aren't running leagues: if you have competition or other bars you'd like to be involved in, word of mouth about well-run leagues will knock down all barriers.

Did you hire someone to run them or did you do it yourself?

With four brothers involved, we all pitched in until we saw that we would have to hire someone to handle it. When it became clear that the statistics demanded a full-time person, we enlisted the aid of my wife Tamarra, who currently overseas all league activities. I don't know that we'd do it different even if we knew then what we know now. This way we all learned what it was all about. Now we understand it better than we would have if we'd hired someone from the beginning to handle the leagues. You need to know all about your leagues before you know who you need to hire or if you need to hire someone.

In your league locations, do you sell pool cues, cases, darts, etc?"

Yes, and it's not just to make money. Players want it. We offer it to our locations, but if they don't want to do it, we'll sell it for them. It's to service our bars. We have approximately 700 NDA dart players and 400 VNEA pool players. Any of those people can call us at any time, and we'll help them get what they need.

An added benefit we hadn't counted on is that it's helped us on our own cue maintenance in locations. Instead of using the bar sticks we supply, players are buying their own. In fact, right now we'll buy the cheapest sticks available. Most players are playing with their own sticks anyway.

Any final words?

Yes, in the production of leagues you will have a company representative in most of your locations as often as five times a week. This goes a long way to promote your relationships with the locations. It's also beneficial in finding out about service calls even before the location knows they have a problem. If you're a street operator and aren't running leagues, what are you waiting for? ▲

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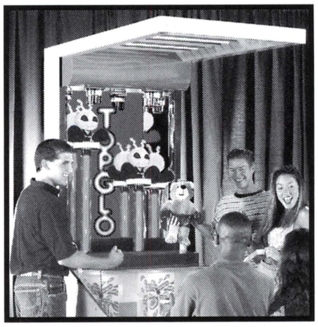

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TOUCHTUNES

TouchTunes celebrates IN MONTREAL

ON THE EVE OF THE OFFICIAL PRODUCT LAUNCH, A DIFFERENT KIND OF JUKEBOX COMPANY GEARS UP FOR HIGH-TECH MUSIC DELIVERY DESIGNED TO RAISE THE LEVEL OF EXCITEMENT IN LOCATIONS.

TouchTunes Digital Jukebox staff and well-wishers toasted to a bright future for the company at the grand opening of its new headquarters in Montreal (Quebec), Canada, in late May.

Canadian operators and investors were eager to see and hear about the long-awaited finished product, the digitally downloaded jukebox that has been in development for three years. Long before the industry got its first peek at the new music system in a hotel suite at AMOA Expo '95, TouchTunes CEO and president Tony Mastronardi began assembling a team that would bring his vision of a high-tech music vehicle to reality.

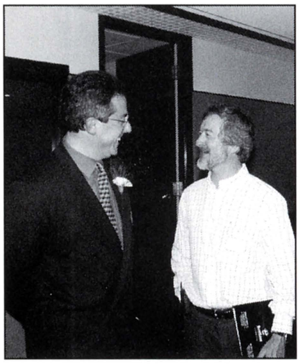
The path from the concept in 1993 to today involved applying for numerous patents, acquiring performing rights licenses, securing contractual arrangements with record label companies, constructing prototype jukeboxes, and negotiating with MCI, Bose Corp., and other entities.

Mastronardi welcomed visitors and informed them that 40 complete units are out in the field awaiting FCC, UL, and CAC certification tests. "Assembly line production should be at the end of July," he added. "There will be literally tens of thousands of current music titles available by the time the units are shipped." In a few weeks, he promised, there will be formal announcements regarding licensing and titles that will be available.

Downloading will occur from the Touch Tunes primary facility at MCI headquarters near Washington, D.C., with backup capabilities at the Montreal office in case of any technical glitch

TouchTunes
TOUCH THE SCREEN ANYWHERE

Proud of the finished product, (l-r): Jean-Marc Bourdelais, software manager; Dominique Dion, project leader; Hughes Marcotte, Bose Corp.; Sylvain Duchesne, technology director; Guy Nathan, senior vice president; Tony Mastronardi CEO and president; Pierre Martineau, vice president of technology; Edmond Lemieux, Bose Canada; Dan McAllister, national sales manager; and John Margold, vice president of sales and marketing.



Tony Mastronardi (l), chatting with investor Brian Gallagher.

TouchTunes
TOUCH THE SCREEN ANYWHERE

Chris Marcalifas demonstrates the jukebox to one of the TouchTunes investors.

or natural disaster on the East Coast.

This is how the system works:

Jukeboxes will be connected to a local MCI line (toll-free dial-up); calls go to MCI in Washington, D.C. MCI will handle the automatic accounting function that tracks titles played, money taken in, etc. This function should take only a few seconds of the call itself, explained Pierre Martineau, vice president of technology. New music will be downloaded to the jukebox in an MPEG (Moving Pictures Experts Group) format that protects sound quality. It uses a brand-new audio compression utility just licensed to TouchTunes from Germany.

Music comes in at a sampling rate of 44,100 samples per second. The download time for an average song should take about 20 minutes, which includes a picture for title purposes. The computer download capacity from both the facility in Washington, D.C., and the backup facility in Montreal can hold one terrabyte of music, or 1,000 gigabytes.

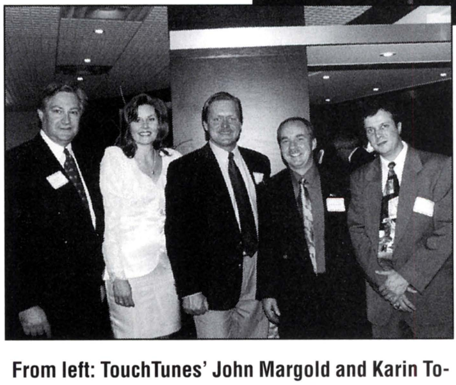
John Margold and Pierre Martineau in Montreal's Terrabyte Room. The equivalent of 1,000 gigs of hard drive memory resides here.

The company's Chicago advertising firm of DeMeo-Rosen, represented by Bernie DeMeo (l) and Mary Beth Turner, with John Margold.

The jukebox initiates the accounting function call for daily polling. If lines are tied up and no call is made, TouchTunes will contact the operator to see if there is a problem. If no contact is made in four days time, the jukebox will be rendered inoperable. Like a cell phone, a stolen unit is useless without activation.

TouchTunes is dealing direct with operators in a partnering program to bring this new technology to the market. The revenue is split three ways among operator, location, and TouchTunes. TouchTunes provides the constant flow and extensive range of music and pays all royalty fees.

Can the future hold any more promise? Conceivably, the next move may be switching from MCI lines to 10-inch satellite dish hookups for the downloading and polling functions. ▲



From left: TouchTunes' John Margold and Karin Tobin with Canadian operators Marc Raymond (Ray-Marc Automatique), and Jean-Marc Laniel and Denis Desmarais of Laniel Canada.

Quick $ilver

OPEN TO CHANGE AND READY TO RESPOND

Four years ago, we did a company profile on Quick Silver Development Co. which, at that time, had been in business for a decade. Company founder Alex Malavazos gave us an insider's look at words he had written when he began his journey into the realm of coin-op entertainment. He believed that it took innovation and excellence for a company to be successful. He wrote: "First and foremost we are innovative people. Innovation meaning being open to change and ready to respond to that change, not simply doing business as usual. Innovation is a way of thinking about business, our business." These words, so proudly written, are still the goal of Quick Silver.

Now that the company's innovative line of products has given power to Alex's goal of striving for innovation and excellence, let's take a look at what is happening now. Although Quick Silver began with one basic concept and project—a gaming slot machine—over the past three years alone it has developed dozens of products in whole or part. You've seen Quick Silver's work in games like *Tic-Tac-Toe* from Skee-Ball, its *Quick Change* game licensed by Sega, *Hoop It Up* electronics for Time Warner Interactive, and the Classic Jukebox developed for Wal-Mart's Radio Grill. According to Alex, "Currently we have 18 projects in development, some of which have taken more than a year. In the next few months we will be introducing a revolutionary new slot machine."

The company has brought leading edge technology and the latest state-of-the-art electronics to various industries, starting with slot machines; then on to arcade redemption equipment; and proceeding to kiddie rides and jukeboxes. As markets changed, so did Quick Silver, evolving into electronic entertainment bulk vending. The company is currently comprised of five divisions: gaming, arcade, bulk vending, electronic systems, and specialty products, which have ranged from pull tab lottery equipment and point of purchase displays to a host of other products in diverse industries. However, Quick Silver is very focused and is concentrating on its core business of research and development of various electromechanical products.

The modest Alex would probably cringe at my calling Quick Silver a bulk vending guru, but it describes the company's position so well. Quick Silver has introduced a new line of innovative bulk vending products and Alex and his brother Greg were asked to speak at the National Bulk Vendors Association's annual trade show.

The Quick Silver staff showing off the *Classic Jukebox Vendor*.

Alex has a message to anyone hesitating about operating electronic entertainment bulk vending equipment: "There's nothing to fear, but fear itself!" Well said, even if it's not an original quote. He adds, "Don't be confused, worried, or scared about electronic entertainment bulk vending. There are a number of resources to help you effectively utilize today's technology."

Quick Silver always has several projects in various stages of development. The company designs all of its own electronics, does the programming, and has its own sound studio. (The next time you visit Disneyland, you will benefit from Quick Silver's electronics system in one of the new Tomorrowland exhibits.) Quick Silver has provided many other companies with their electronics expertise, including gaming companies. It is currently working on brand-marketed equipment, including corporate-to-corporate products with promotional tie-ins, such as the Herman Goelitz Candy Co., the producers of Jelly Belly candies. In addition, Quick Silver is developing electronic entertainment bulk vending machines suitable for the nightclub and bar market.

Alex is convinced that electronic entertainment bulk vending is the next generation in bulk vending and is revolutionizing the industry. The new machines combine elements of bulk vending, entertainment, advertising, technology, and innovation. They offer opportunities for enhanced return on investment. "However, a word of caution here," according to Alex. "Not all equipment is created equal. Operators should check thoroughly to be sure the equipment is reliable and can dispense a variety of products and sizes. There are also some scam manufacturers out there. Operators should get the names and phone numbers of satisfied customers before placing an order. There are only a few manufacturers that can produce reliable electronic entertainment bulk vending equipment in volume."

Quick Silver is convinced that bulk vending can be profitable for operators and has been assisting them in several ways. For instance, the company provides free training classes at its facility and provides hands-on experience that illustrates how technology can better help an operator's business to compete effectively. Quick Silver shares its tips for effective placement and marketing of the machines as well as how to avoid common pitfalls. Quick Silver tailors training to meet specific needs so operators get the most out of the time spent at the facility. It also advises on which equipment is more likely to work well in which type of location and which products should be dispensed.

How serious is Quick Silver about bulk vending? "We are positioned to dominate the entertainment bulk vending market," Alex vows. "We currently have the largest variety of entertainment bulk vending equipment available in the market with two more pieces of equipment just introduced this month. Since bulk vending is a global industry, we are developing equipment that is suitable for foreign markets as well as here in the United States."

He continued, "We can adapt our machines for the different power requirements and coin sizes required by other countries and digitize the special sounds they require. Our products also have custom graphic packages to suit the specific needs of our customers. Electronic entertainment bulk vending is opening the door to many new locations worldwide that traditionally did not consider vending advantageous."

> ***"The company has brought leading edge technology and the latest state-of-the-art electronics to various industries.***

Alex went on to say that this industry is all about return on investment and he believes that electronic bulk vending is one of the best around. He explained, "We have seen equipment paid back in just a few short months. Earnings continue to astonish us. Many operators have reported that their earnings have increased dramatically with the addition of electronic entertainment bulk vending equipment to their routes. It then increased 20 to 30 percent more with the use of bill acceptors added to their equipment."

There are several factors, Alex pointed out, that contribute to the increased revenues. Extremely reliable equipment is, of course, the first. Alex added, "Among the reasons for increased revenues are higher quality product being vended, the ability to dispense multiple products, and the opportunity to generate a bonus award. With continuing innovation and new technology, we don't yet see a plateau in the revenue stream."

Alex continued, "Also, we're noticing that more owners and managers are requesting the newest and latest in electronic entertainment bulk vending equipment for their locations. Not only do they realize that they're getting a better return on their investment, but they want to differentiate themselves from their competition. They don't want outdated-looking equipment. They're looking for new and exciting equipment in their entryways to lure customers into the store. The newest equipment, with its sound, lights, and motion, appeals to all of their customers' senses and is difficult to ignore.

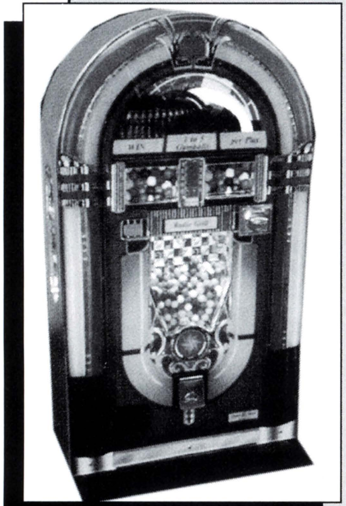
"We appreciate the feedback we get from our customers, not just what we're doing right but also where we can continue to improve. It is the continuing reorders by which we gauge our customers' satisfaction. Because Quick Silver is an operator as well as a manufacturer, we get continuing feedback from our locations and realize that reliability is the most important factor. If it's not working, it's not earning."

Quick Silver moved to its new building in Carson City, Nev., just under two years ago. It still retains its family nature even though its employee count is growing monthly. Alex said, "We're proud and privileged that all of our key staff chose to make the move with us. This is not just a business, it's become a way of life for all of us. This is a unique business. Not only do we get to create and build new products, we get to have fun playing with them and watching our customers enjoy them. Over the years, many of our customers and vendors have become close personal friends."

It's ironic that four years ago, Quick Silver's slogan for its line of redemption products was "Where the fun stacks up!" referring, of course, to the stacks of tickets players won from the machines and the stacks of quarters operators counted in the coin box.

Today, with its bulk vending equipment dominating the market, perhaps that slogan should be modified to read, "Where the fun rolls down!" ▲

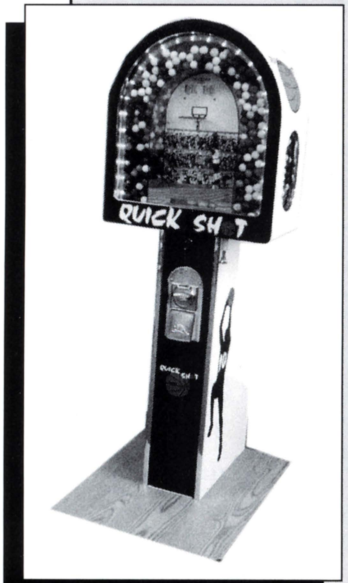
Quick Silver's bulk vending machines are interactive. There's more to it than simply vending a product. These machines get the customer involved with the purchase.



CLASSIC JUKEBOX VENDOR

This interactive skill-stop vending unit features a round top with classic 1950s styling. Additionally, it has four-color chasing rope lights, four-channel sound, and brilliantly colored graphics. When customers deposit their coin they hear one of six short pieces of 1950s and 1960s rock and roll music, then activate a push-to-play button as five lamps flash numbers from one to five.

It requires the customer to get involved by making a simple choice of when to push the button. Thus he stops the blinking, moving award lights (total of five lights of various awards amounts from one to five) that display the next amount to be vended. The fact that the customer perceives that he has an input in determining the outcome is a powerful incentive. He always gets a vended product but now has the opportunity to get up to five vends per play.



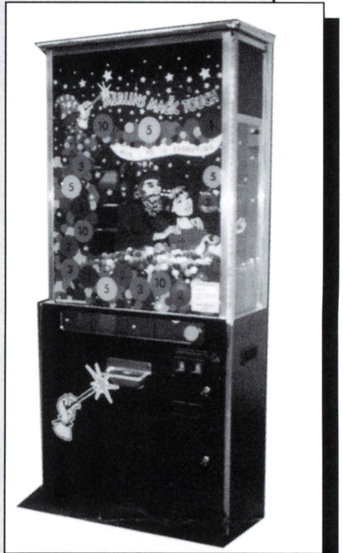
QUICK SHOT BASKETBALL VENDOR

As with other Quick Silver products, the customer is involved in this interactive game. It was designed specifically as a bulk vendor, a ticket redemption game, or as a combination bulk vendor/ticket redemption game that would appeal to all ages. The potential awards are adjustable. Once the customer deposits his coin the clock starts and he has 10 seconds to use the shooter mechanism to score as many baskets as possible. After play time is finished, *Quick Shot Basketball* dispenses products or tickets corresponding to the number of shots made. This piece is great for operators who want their customers to have the immediate gratification of receiving a prize and also a secondary prize via the ticket redemption. It has vivid basketball graphics, a four-digit sound chip, and dazzling rope lighting.

Irresistible Stuff

SHOWCASE VENDOR (IRRESISTIBLE STUFF)

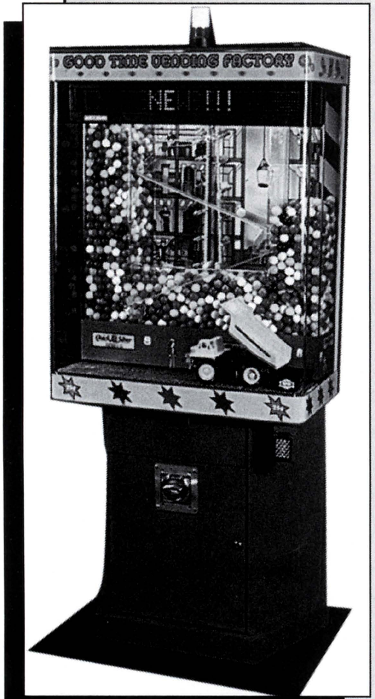
This multivendor unit was designed to replace antiquated mechanical bulk head machines for medium to high traffic areas. It has nine large capacity bins, brilliant graphics, unique new themed designs (not just generic pieces), high visibility, fluorescent lighting, individual bin counters, onboard accounting system, and sound. There are also additional available features like a bill validator, coin dispenser, news and sport service (Info-ticker), and expansion up to 15 bins. Customers will not be able to resist the flashing multicolor select buttons flashing in random patterns, and they will be enticed by the fluorescent lighting inside to preview the product.



MERLIN'S MAGIC TOUCH VENDOR

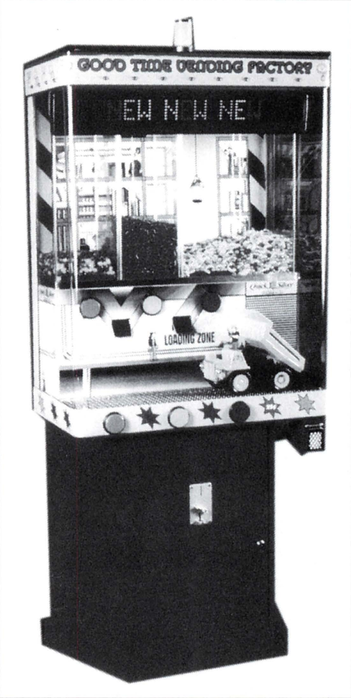
This new electronic entertainment bulk vendor asks the customer to make a simple choice. He tries to stop the blinking lights on the highest number lit. The customer will always get a vended product, but now has the opportunity to receive up to 10 vends per play.

GOOD TIME VENDING FACTORY



This electronic entertainment bulk vendor comes as a single or multiple unit. Customers are treated to a "factory" whistle when the show begins. A chain pulls the product to the top and then allows it to slide down a construction chute while a truck moves across the playfield in time to catch the product, back up, and dispense it to the customer. It can vend gum, jawbreakers, and small capsules. There are great sound effects, lights, graphics, movement, and a large eight-color dot matrix programmable display for advertising.

The multiple unit can dispense three different products simultaneously. You select a product and a truck moves to that location where a chute delivers the product to the truck. The truck then backs up and dumps the product into a bin to the customer. It can vend jelly beans, peanuts, gum, capsules, and a variety of small bulk products.



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GUEST COMMENTARY

A call for ACTION

Michael C. Getlan
Amusement Consultants Ltd.

Strong laws on violent game content being proposed in Florida could have far-reaching ramifications in our industry. The issue is serious; it's time to respond.

Coin-op video game operators in the United States received an undeserved respite from pending legislation being proposed in the Florida House of Representatives and the Florida Senate in their most recent sessions. Florida HB-3341 and Florida S-696 entitled the "Children's Protection from Violence Acts" did not pass through committee to reach the floor of the House or the Senate, where it would have faced a vote.

If the legislation had been voted on by the representatives and had successfully passed, HB-3341 and S-696 would have become the strongest laws on the books against video game content, essentially making it unlawful for any operation to allow patrons under the age of 18 to operate or even view video games that contain graphic violence of almost any kind.

Games such as Sega's *House of the Dead*, Atari's *California Speed*, Midway's *Mortal Kombat,* and Namco's *Tekken* series would all be affected, as well as many older titles. The proposed legislation would include any game with even a single incidence of graphic violence, which would require many games that are mostly acceptable to still be restricted in their operation.

What are the boundaries?

The proposed legislation would impose penalties and fines of up to $50,000 and would require businesses to check the identification of players or viewers for proof of age. The legislation would require all games with graphic violence to be virtually isolated in a place that could not be viewed by the public so that persons under the age of 18 could not even view the attract modes of these games.

In the definitions included in the proposed legislation, graphic violence is defined as "the depiction or representation of death or severe injury including, but not limited to: 1) decapitation, 2) dismemberment, 3) repeated instances of bloodletting, or 4) grotesque cruelty in a way such that the depiction or representation shocks the conscience of the community and exceeds the boundaries of what should be tolerated in a civilized society."

To express your views to legislators and explain industry efforts, contact:

Rep. Barry Silver (D)
9070 Kimberly Blvd.
Suite 59
Boca Raton, FL 33434
fax: (954)917-1302
e-mail
(silver.barry.web@leg.state.fl.us)

Sen. John A. Grant (R)
610 W. Waters Ave
Suite A
Tampa, FL 33604
fax: (813)975-6688
e-mail
(grant.john.web@leg.sate.fl.us)

This proposed legislation means that a person under the age of 18 could not even play these games with parental permission. These games would have to be removed from family entertainment centers, amusement parks, and arcades, limiting them to places that already have the need to require identification such as establishments that serve alcohol, but only those that restrict children from entering.

Industry self-regulation

The proposed legislation only affects Florida at the moment, but this state, like New York and California, is considered a bellwether state, with legislators in other U.S. states looking at legislation that passes as potential fodder for their cannons. With many other social issues, such as cigarette vending machines and drunk driving already legislated, violent video game content is a wide-open target.

It seems that the industry as a whole has an "it's not my problem" attitude. Although members of the Amusement and Music Operators Association of Florida have been trying to fight this legislation, their money and resources are limited and help is required. The American Amusement Machine Association has made some efforts to inform the Florida legislators of industry efforts to self-regulate, but their budget is limited in this area.

What the industry needs is for manufacturers of video games, both members of AAMA and non-members, as well as forward thinking operators and distributors, to pool their resources and take the necessary steps to educate the legislators backing this bill about the new Video Game Parental Advisory System. This program, backed by AMOA, AAMA, IAFEC, and IAAPA spearheads our efforts to inform parents about game content.

Recently in the United States a new system of television ratings has been introduced to inform parents of the content of the programs to which their children may be exposed. Our industry has also embraced this concept, with warning labels in various colors placed on games, and newer games having warnings included in the attract mode software. Any parent who wishes to regulate the viewing and playing habits of their children now has the information that they need to do so.

Attention U.S. operators

Although the constitutionality of the legislation would be its first test, should it pass the Florida House and Senate, it would be a long and even more expensive fight than to educate the lawmakers involved. A united front from U.S. manufacturers and operators would be a great step in our joint preventative efforts.

What should be done now?

Any Florida operator who wishes to support the industry efforts to educate these legislators should write to Rep. Barry Silver and Sen. John A. Grant (R), reminding them of the industry efforts to self-regulate and stressing the fact that this is an issue that we as operators take very seriously.

These operators also should implement the Video Game Parental Advisory System and have posters up and stickers on all machines in their locations. These stickers and posters should be pointed out to parents as they visit these locations with their children to illustrate our efforts to the general population of Florida.

Any other operators should lend their assistance to Florida operators or to AAMA. Attorneys and lobbyists will deal with the constitutionality of the legislation in the coming months. Now is the time for operators to band together. This legislation could be coming to your state next, or even the country. Time is truly of the essence! ▲

To help Florida operators combat proposed detrimental legislation, contact:

Rich Holley
Southeast Game Brokers
6015 Benjamin Road
Suite 324
Tampa, FL 33634
(818)885-1080
fax: (818)888-7452

Manley Lawson
Lawson Music Co.
2099 42nd St. NW
Winter Haven, FL 33881
(941)967-1171
fax: (941)967-1172

In addition, operators can contact AMOA, (800)937-2662; AAMA, (847)290-9088; IAFEC, (603)464-6498; or IAAPA (703)836-4800.

INDUSTRY ALERT:

The Coin-Operated Amusement Industry has made a commitment to the U.S. Congress that the below "Guide To Coin-Operated Video Games" -- depicting approved Parental Advisory Disclosure Messages -- will be posted in clear view at all locations where video games are found and which are frequented by children. These posters are being made available -- free of charge -- by AAMA, AMOA and IAFEC, and may be ordered by contacting your appropriate association.

GUIDE TO COIN-OPERATED VIDEO GAMES

The following Parental Advisory Disclosure Messages have been established for coin-operated video games to provide consumers with a description of game content.

SUITABLE FOR ALL AGES	**The content of this game is appropriate for game players of all ages.**
ANIMATED VIOLENCE MILD	**Contains scenes of violence involving cartoon-like characters in fantasy settings.**
ANIMATED VIOLENCE STRONG	**Contains scenes of violence involving cartoon-like characters in fantasy or life-like settings such as martial arts or sports activities.**
LIFE LIKE VIOLENCE MILD	**Contains scenes involving human-like characters engaged in combative activity.**
LIFE LIKE VIOLENCE STRONG	**Contains selected scenes involving human-like characters engaged in combative activity which may result in pain, injury and/or death to the depicted character.**
SEXUAL CONTENT MILD	**Contains sexually suggestive references or material.**
SEXUAL CONTENT STRONG	**Contains graphic depictions of sexual behavior and/or the human body.**
LANGUAGE MILD	**Contains commonly used four-letter words.**
LANGUAGE STRONG	**Contains strong four-letter expletives.**

AAMA
AMERICAN AMUSEMENT MACHINE ASSOCIATION

IAFEC

AMOA
Amusement & Music Operators Association

IAAPA

LEGAL EAGLE

TOM FRICKE

They can't *do* that to me

You may remember that during the first phase of the public's love affair with the 25-cent, two-dimensional video game, city after city started enacting ordinances to prohibit the games.

Some cities attempted to prohibit them directly and outright. Others sought to accomplish the same thing in the disguise of "regulation" by "regulating" for example that kids weren't allowed to play the games or that video games couldn't be made available in any concentration larger than just a few of them. There were plenty of court challenges in this new wave of repression, with mixed results.

> *Maybe the situation in Illinois has brought back the video game backlash of the early '80s in a new setting.*

Mixed results means that the video game operator did win, sometimes. There are, after all, limits to what government may prohibit and to how repressively government may regulate. The limits come from the federal and state constitutions, from the state laws that define the police powers of cities, and sometimes, from the pre-emption of a field of regulation, by state laws. The limits on this power are maddeningly general, applying them to any particular regulation or prohibition is tricky and complex—more of an art than a science.

Generally, unless a city restriction applied to First Amendment rights or a suspect classification of people, the rule that limits government police regulation power is 1) that a prohibition or regulation is valid only if it bears a real and substantial relationship to the public's welfare, and 2) is reasonable and not arbitrary.

This is a rule of thumb, no more. The devil is in the application to a particular fact situation. When First Amendment rights or suspect classifications aren't involved, the application can get truly devilish because the city's law is not to be subject to strict judicial scrutiny. Rather, the court's review is the most lenient form of judicial scrutiny under the Constitution. If the restriction or prohibition has at least some reasonable basis, it is not unconstitutional simply because in practice it results in some inequality.

We may someday look back on the late '90s as a period when the public's fancy for video redemption breathed new life into our industry, even similar to the salad days of the 25-cent, two-dimensional extended-play video game—and the period operators once again were compelled to resort to the Courts for protection from the excesses of suspicious City Fathers and their Big Gaming backers.

The legal principles are the same as those with which we struggled in the early '80s. Only the specific questions have changed. They are no longer, "Can video games be banned from our city or our children forbidden from playing them?" The questions are now, "Can the city prohibit amusement redemption? Can it prohibit features of amusement redemption? Can the city or the state prohibit video facsimiles or card games?"

When draconian rules like these come down from City Hall, that's when operators band together, go into court, and win. Like they are in the process of doing right now in Chicago. Imagine an ordinance in your town that didn't ban video redemption outright but had the same effect by prohibiting all of 1) knock-off circuits, 2) more than 10 free games, 3) a count of payoffs, 4) the number of times a person has won a game played on the device, and 5) a tally of players' scores in the machine's accounting.

Real and substantial relationship to the public's welfare? I don't think so. Reasonable and not arbitrary? I don't think so. And neither does the state judge who granted the operators a Temporary Restraining Order in Chicago.

When it comes to the political and judicial processes that determine our fate, there's a material difference between today's reactionary repression of video redemption and the last decade's reactionary repression of video amusement. Today's judges, state legislators, and city councilmen are the previous decade's video game players. Neither video nor redemption are novel to them, or something which they view with suspicion. Here is an example from the transcript of the operators' hearing of May 8 in the Chicago ordinance case.

> **Mr. Mine** *(the city's attorney): Judge, with respect to the new language that counsel is referring to, it's my understanding this is not—this doesn't deal with your ordinary, run-of-the-mill* Ms. Pac-Man*, and frankly I spent most of law school playing* Pac-Man*, so I am not against* Pac-Man.
>
> **The Court:** *I should challenge you.*
>
> **Mr. Mine:** *Judge, perhaps we could make the result of the case pend on that.*
>
> **The Court:** *I don't think you'd want to do that. Go ahead.*

In addition, with licensed, lawful cash gambling all around us, these same judges, city councilmen, and legislators tend not to have the same sensibilities related to the crime and morals overlay of gambling issues that was so common years ago.

These are intangible factors, to be sure. However, the rules about what a city cannot do are so general that the intangible factors will, in my view, inevitably play their role in the process of deciding the operators' specific rights. Can you see the sensibilities at work in this gratifying extract of the hearing transcript?

> **The Court:** *Well, we can't base statutes and ordinance on our understanding because your understanding and my understanding may be different. I just think that this statute is—I think it's vague. I think it's overbroad. I think it's ambiguous. I think that there is an ascertainable right.*
>
> *People are in the business. You are getting ready to enforce it. I don't think that there's any adequate remedy at law because they can be forced out of business. Even though you have shops that have video games in them and they have all sorts of contests in clubs and so forth, I think under the statute you may be able to close down all those clubs.*
>
> *So I think that there is no adequate remedy at law. I think that there will be irreparable harm and balancing of the equities. Until I can hear a preliminary injunction, I think that the balance lies with the individual because the purpose of the court room is to be a level playing field and to give, you know, individuals the right to confront, you know, people of power and government and so forth and so on, and in my view, I think the balance of power—the balance of equities actually lies within the individual, so I'm going to enter a Temporary Restraining Order in this case."*

"Today's judges, state legislators, and city councilmen are the previous decade's video game players."

Several columns back, I published an essay under the title, "Debunking the Myth of Prohibited Features." My point there was that objective features referred to in court opinions as relevant to an all-facts-considered assessment of a particular gambling device, are irrelevant and unsuitable as talismans.

The presence of these features is not the least bit probative all by themselves, that a device having them is used to break the law. I believe that any law that uses these features as a badge of illegality per se, lacks the rational basis bridge between the prohibition and the objective and is therefore unconstitutional. (In this I am not saying that the courts have always agreed with me or I with the courts.)

Moreover, the objective features test has been historically discredited. The original Johnson Act prohibited only devices with drums and reels. Soon after it was passed in 1951, new gambling devices appeared that served exactly the same purpose, but didn't use drums and reels. Accordingly, the original proved to be so useless that Congress had to amend it in 1962, to do away with the objective features approach to identify what is prohibited by the penal law.

Like all history, those who forget this lesson are condemned to repeat it, as the Chicago City Council has done. In addition to lacking a rational basis for its prohibition, the "prohibited features" ordinance of Chicago, and in my view any other "prohibited feature" ordinance may be effective in hurting a lot of operators, but it won't be effective to protect the State's and Big Gaming's (perceived) monopoly by prohibiting illicit gambling.

Most importantly, however, when the City prohibits an objective feature of an amusement game, it had better consider how the feature is defined and what harmless and accepted amusement games contain that feature. Here is an example, again from the transcript of the operators' hearing in Chicago:

The Court: *Let me ask you one thing—let me ask the City this: What is a knock-off circuit?*

Mr. Mine: *Judge, it's my understanding that a knock-off circuit is not just the standard reset. It's a switch that—it's often hooked up to the bar where these gambling machines are located. It's a special way to zero down.*

What these things have is they typically have dual counters, two sets of counters in the machine, that is my understanding, and if you are playing the machine and you rack up, say, $25, $50 worth of games and you want to cash out because you have won your gambling for the day, you tell the bartender. The bartender will come over and look at the game, see how much you've won, and then he will press his reset or her reset button back at the bar or whatever to zero that down.

He or she has seen what you've won, so they'll pay you out but there is a second counter in there that tells the company that brought the machine, that's leasing the machine to the bar, how many total games have been played and won because they typically have an arrangement between the lessor and the bartender or the bar owner to split the gambling proceeds, so that the reset button or the knock-off...

The Court *(interrupting Mr. Mine): I think you are getting far afield. All I want to know is what a knock-off switch is.*

Mr. Mine: *The knock-off switch is what they use to zero down, the visible counter without zeroing, without cancelling the entire play. That's my best understanding, Judge.*

The Court: *If that's your best understanding, then I don't understand it at all.*

The City must, in addition to defining its terms, also avoid by its use of objective features, criminalizing an entire industry that the public, including the judges, legislators, and city councilmen themselves, accept as perfectly harmless.

Even with this malleable standard used with respect to limits on a city's power, this rule of thumb applies: The City can't throw the baby out with the bath water. This is what you call arbitrary. And here is another rule of thumb, illustrated by the Chicago situation: You can fight City Hall. ▲

Editor's note: We gratefully acknowledge the cooperation of Glenn Udell of Chicago, attorney for the operators in this action, in making pertinent transcripts available.

Tom Fricke is a St. Louis-based attorney who specializes in legal issues relating to the amusement game business. He serves as chairman of the IAFEC government relations committee and can be reached at (314)361-6672.

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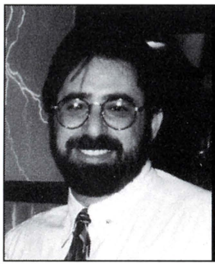


Michael C. Getlan is a third generation owner/operator of arcades and FECs and a member of IAAPA's Education, Technology, and Award Committees. He is director of operations for Amusement Consultants Ltd. of New Rochelle, N.Y., which operates 40 locations in 12 U.S. states and Central America, and is a frequent speaker at industry conventions. He can be reached at (914)576-7800; fax (914)576-6748; or via the Internet (http://www.amusementconsult.com).

I have a friend who has spent the last 20 years as a stock broker. He explained to me that there are two basic ways to look at the different kinds of stock to sell—some are raincoats and some are lingerie. I think the same metaphor applies to the coin-op machine business.

Raincoats are the kinds of stocks that are safe, tend to look similar, and have a good dependable rate of return. They can protect you through bad weather but are not the most exciting product to sell. Lingerie, on the other hand, is flimsy, available in a wide variety, and prone to fall part. It is not very long-lasting, offers little or no protection, but has tremendous attraction and is a very sexy product.

If high-tech products such as virtual reality and standard video games are the lingerie of our industry, then kiddie rides are the raincoats, along with vending machines, pool tables, dart games, jukeboxes, and other equipment.

Dependable earnings

Kiddie rides are a constant in the coin-op industry. With a market that is constantly renewing itself, kiddie rides have a very long shelf life. Kids love to ride them, and when one age group grows up, another takes its place. As these rides are rotated, either between locations or just in and out of a location, they become new every time.

They provide a steady, dependable rate of return as long as they are maintained, operated safely, and kept clean. Preventative maintenance on mechanical parts and repainting are the primary operational issues.

The new trend, which has been going on for a few years now, is the addition of licensed kiddie rides to the standard collection of horses, cars, boats, planes, trucks, and regular animal-type kiddie rides with which we are all familiar. Licensed rides, which allow operators to benefit from the appeal of well-known and well-loved characters or brands, have added to the already wide variety of generic rides.

Themes are almost endless, from transportation to fantasy experiences. I find that multiple ride sites are the best, with rides grouped together in family entertainment centers or mall sites, as children tend to want to ride on each machine in turn. In fact, multiple ride kiosks are now available to enhance the look of this type of ride arrangement.

New technology

As the children of today are exposed to more influences and more choices, the manufacturers of kiddie rides constantly come up with new twists to entertain, and in some cases, educate their customers.

Where the old classic kiddie ride simply moved back and forth or up and down, newer rides have additional activities for children to do while on the ride. Interactive elements such as buttons that play sounds or activate view screens keep children interested and increase repeat riders.

"If high-tech products are the lingerie of the business, then kiddie rides are the raincoats."

Other kiddie ride offerings include a photo shot option so that in addition to simply riding the ride, a child can take away a photo of the experience. These rides have a greater appeal in the transient market and similarly appeal to the adults, as everyone wants to get in the picture.

Certain licensed rides have, as part of their interactive attractions, educational elements that attempt to teach shapes, numbers, and sounds. These would be especially good to group together, as each ride complements the other. The positive public relations value of these rides should not be overlooked.

The best way to really learn about all the different choices in kiddie rides is to speak to your distributors and explore the offerings of various manufacturers. There are many good firms that specialize in kiddie rides from the United States, England, Italy, Spain, and Australia. Each has carved out its own niche in the industry as each company's offering has its own benefits.

Serve all market segments

It is always important to customize your choice of equipment to the market your facility serves. Examine and test out each ride before you purchase it. I use my son to check out and evaluate the rides that I purchase. You should always get an expert opinion.

For the youngest guests in your facility, kiddie rides offer enjoyment and educational possibilities unavailable to those too young to play the popular video games.

Kiddie rides offer the long-term protection and earnings that are lacking in many of the coin-op investments available today. In the rough weather that we sometimes face in the coin-op business, the wise course is to invest in some raincoats. ▲

TAX
TIPS

Annual report on the wealth transfer plan test: THE NEWS IS BETTER

This 1997 report is about two months late. Sorry, I was riding a hospital bed, but I'm fine now. My 1996 report said in part:

"If you use the right tax tools and techniques together with the right professionals (lawyer, insurance consultant, and CPA), you can and will develop a plan to beat the IRS. Every time. And legally. Unfortunately, the goal of the typical estate planner is to reduce estate taxes. Our goal is always the same: to eliminate taxes."

There are three types of readers that call us for help: The reader who (1) has an estate plan but needs a second opinion, (2) has no plan, or (3) has been working on a plan for years and just can't seem to get it done. Which type are you?

We will do a transfer/estate plan (and any necessary valuation) for each reader. We will report back to you (through this column) how many readers responded, how many we could and could not help, and a summary of the tax tools and techniques used to help the readers.

Here are last year's results. In all, 16 readers (more than we expected) responded; 15 were in either category (1) or category (2), and of course, were easy to help using the tax techniques and strategies described in this column over the years.

A 61-year-old from Ohio (let's call him Joe)—fell into the second opinion category. Joe's letter said in part: "I...enclosed all the information...you asked for. My current plan (two short wills and two long revocable trusts; one of each for Joe, the others for his wife Mary) looks good...but somehow I don't feel comfortable...so I request...a second opinion."

Joe and Mary turned out to be a very interesting case and, sadly, contained some common estate plan errors. Sure, their documents—wills and trusts—were near perfect. Problem is they just didn't work. Let's see why.

Joe and Mary are worth just over $5 million, plus Joe has a number of life insurance policies totalling $1.1 million on his life that name Mary as the beneficiary. The $5 million is made up of $800,000 in Joe's rollover IRA with Mary as beneficiary. The balance of the assets ($4.2 million)—Joe's business, their residence, some real estate, and other investments—are all held in joint tenancy by Joe and Mary.

The wills and trusts—48 pages in total—were designed by a large law firm to pass Joe's and Mary's assets in a highly organized plan, first to the survivor of Joe and Mary and then to their children and grandchildren. Because Joe is five years older than Mary (and females outlive males by about six years), it was assumed that Joe would pass on first.

OK, suppose Joe died. Everything, and we mean everything, would go to Mary. Joe's trust would get nothing and be a worthless stack of paper. This is why: As the named beneficiary, Mary would get the $800,000 in the IRA. What about the other assets—worth $4.2 million? All to Mary immediately...because property held in joint tenancy goes to the survivor.

It should be pointed out that if Mary had died the day after Joe, the tax bite would have exceeded $2.5 million of the $6.1 million now owned by Mary.

What's the lesson to be learned from this second opinion story? A will and a revocable trust—no matter how terrific—standing alone can never be a complete estate plan.

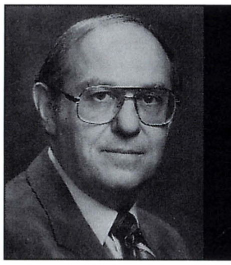
We used a number of strategies to change Joe's and Mary's estate plan: (1) a grantor retained interest trust for the residence, (2) a grantor retained annuity trust for the business, (3) an irrevocable trust for the insurance, (4) a subtrust for the profit-sharing plan to pay for the additional life insurance needed, (5) a family limited partnership to hold the balance of their assets, and (6) organize a gift-giving program to their children and grandchildren. With minor changes, the original wills and trusts were left alone.

If you want to participate in the 1998 test, please send the following information (send copies, not original documents):

1. For your business—your last-year end (a) financial statement and (b) tax return (if 1997 is not done, send 1996).
2. Personal—(a) your last personal tax return (if 1997 is not done, send 1996) and (b) a current personal financial statement for you and your spouse.
3. A family tree—your name, age, and birthday. Same for your spouse. Names of your kids, their spouses, and your grandchildren.
4. Current estate plan—your will and all trusts. Same for your spouse.

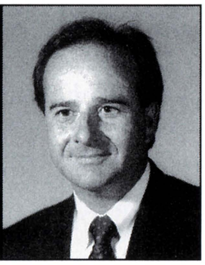
Send to Irv Blackman, WEALTH TRANSFER PLAN TEST, Blackman Kallick Bartelstein, LLP, 300 South Riverside Plaza, Chicago, IL 60606. What's our job? To create the right plan for you, your family, and your business, and to coordinate and work with your professionals.

As always, if we can't help you, there's no charge. OK, that's the plan. Let's hear from you. ▲



IRVING BLACKMAN

Irving Blackman and Brian Whitlock are CPAs with Blackman, Kallick, Bartelstein LLP in Chicago. Also lawyers, they specialize in business succession and wealth transfer. Both are sought-after speakers. Want to consult? Need a second opinion? Contact them at (312)207-1040; fax (312)207-1066. Their special reports are available at a nominal fee.



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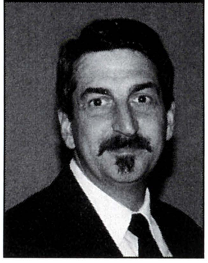

See the light: understanding pinball's lamp matrix

A
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Lights are important in the amusement game industry. Everything simply has to light up in some way. At the very least, a video or redemption piece will have marquee and/or coin door lights. These lights help make the games attractive. But nowhere are lamps more important than in a pinball machine where the lamps are arranged in a circuit known as the lamp matrix.

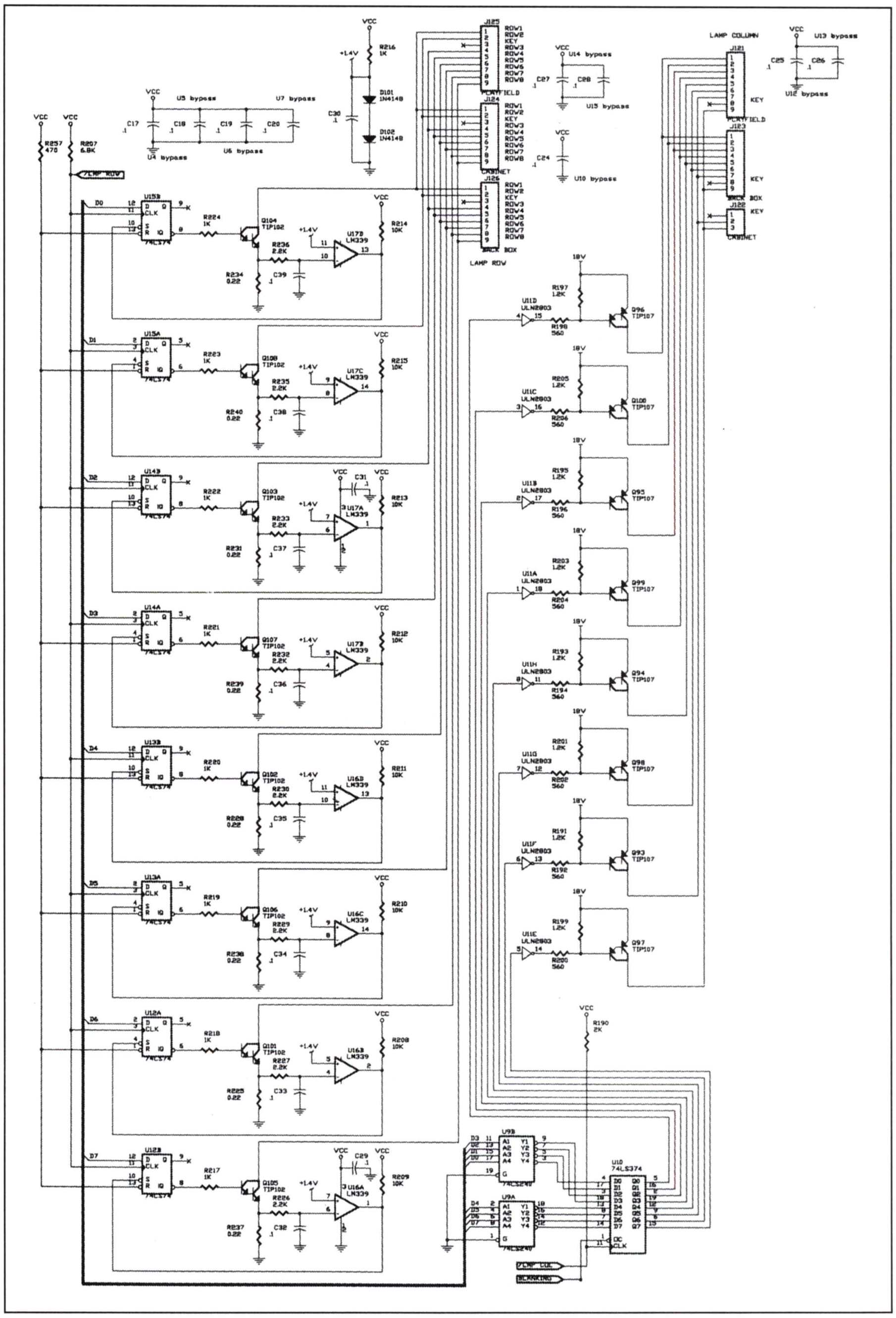
Before we look at the lamp matrix, let's take a look at the most basic way to control a lamp—a ground switch. In the world of electronics, there are a couple of different ways to control a load such as a lamp, solenoid, or motor. One is to switch the power source on or off. That certainly makes a lot of sense. To turn something on, you simply connect it to a power source. To turn it off, you remove power. Simple, huh? This is, of course, the way you turn on and off the lights in your house. With the flick of a switch, you are connecting or disconnecting the "hot" side of the AC power to the light bulbs.

But that's not generally the way it's done in the world of electronics and solid-state control. Instead, the power source is connected directly to the load and the "return path" is switched in or out. Let me explain:

You see, in order to have a complete circuit and light a lamp you need four things. You need a source of power (duh). It could be a battery or a power supply of some sort. Regardless, we refer to this as the "source." You also need the lamp itself. The lamp, like anything that uses the power from the source, is referred to as the "load." You need a way to get the power from the source to the load using a wire or a printed circuit board trace. This is called the "source path."

Finally, you need a pathway to get the current back from the load to the source. After all, you wouldn't expect the lamp to light up with just one wire connected, would you? This is called the "return path." The return path is usually "ground."

There are two ways to control the lamp. Open either the source path or the return path, and the lamp is off. In practice, the easiest way to do this is by controlling the return path. By making and breaking the ground connection,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D102 1N4148
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R257 47Ω
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LM339
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LAMP CLK
BLANKING

the lamp can be turned on and off. The most common way to do this is with a ground switch, a transistor that completes a connection to ground when activated. This is usually an NPN transistor with a grounded emitter. The source is connected directly to the load, with the return path being completed by the transistor (when activated). Of course, the ground switch is used to control more than just lamps. The same system is used in pinball machines to control solenoids. Each of the TIP120 transistors that drive the coils are simply completing the ground path for its assigned coil–one transistor for each coil.

And that illustrates the problem with using the ground switch to control the lamps in a pinball machine. While you might have to control up to a couple of dozen solenoids in a pinball machine, there can be as many as 80 lamps! To control such a large number of lamps with ground switches would require 80 individual transistors, 80 separate return path wires, and 160 connector pins to connect the whole mess to the lamp driver circuitry on the printed circuit board. There has to be a better way!

The lamp matrix

The concept and operation of the lamp matrix is the same in both Williams and Sega pinball machines. However, the circuitry is slightly different between the two. Let's look at Williams first.

Williams pinball

The lamp matrix consists of eight columns and eight rows, with a lamp connected between each column and each row. There is also a diode in series with each lamp. In a matrix, this is known as a "steering" diode. It is needed to keep the current flowing along the proper pathways. There are some who refer to this diode as an "isolation" diode, but I don't believe that to be the correct term. The property of isolation is generally reserved for that of a transformer.

Each of the columns is a separate source path, individually controlled by one of eight TIP107 PNP darlington transistors. These transistors are turned on and off in rapid succession, one after another. This is known as strobing.

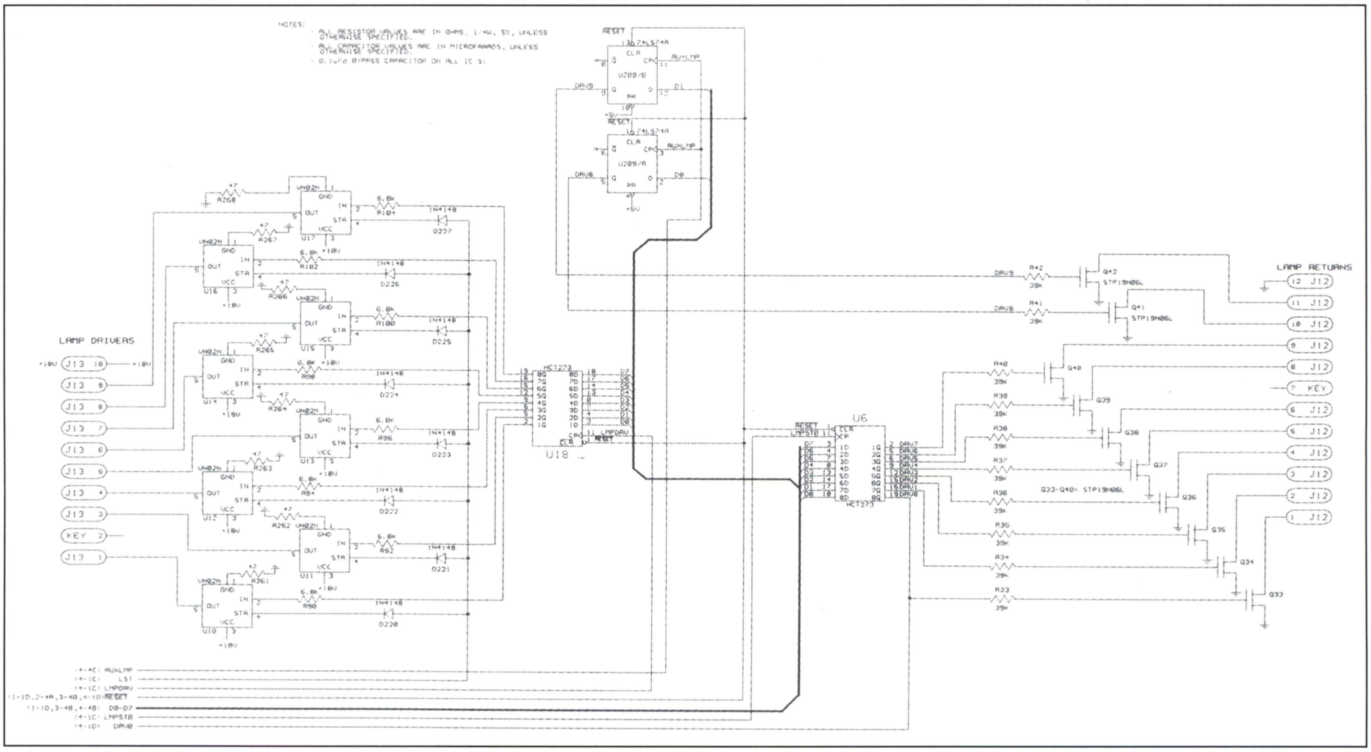
It's easy to understand how the strobe circuit works. The emitter connections of all eight TIP107 transistors are connected directly to the +18 volt DC power supply. The collector connection of each transistor becomes the strobe output that drives each of the lamp columns. On the schematic diagram and in the lamp matrix table (conveniently located on the inside of the back cover of every Williams operations manual), they are labeled column 1 through 8.

In order to control the column outputs, the base of each TIP107 is connected to the output of driver IC U11, a ULN2803. Actually, this device only looks like an integrated circuit. It's really an NPN darlington transistor array of eight individual transistors that take TTL level inputs. Driving the ULN2083 is an "octal latch" (74ls374) U10 that grabs data off the rapidly changing data bus and holds on to it for as long as the strobe lines need to be active.

One at a time, each output of U10 is activated for a period of approximately one millisecond (1/1000 second). As you would expect, it takes eight milliseconds to complete the cycle which then repeats and runs continuously.

When the output of integrated circuit U10 activates, the associated TIP107 transistor is switched on. This allows the +18 volt power supply to pass through the transistor, sending a +18 volt DC pulse down the column.

The columns are only half of the lamp matrix circuit. Each strobe line is used to send a pulse to a group of eight lamps, but all eight lamps don't light up at once. How do we light just one lamp? Individual lamps are selected by

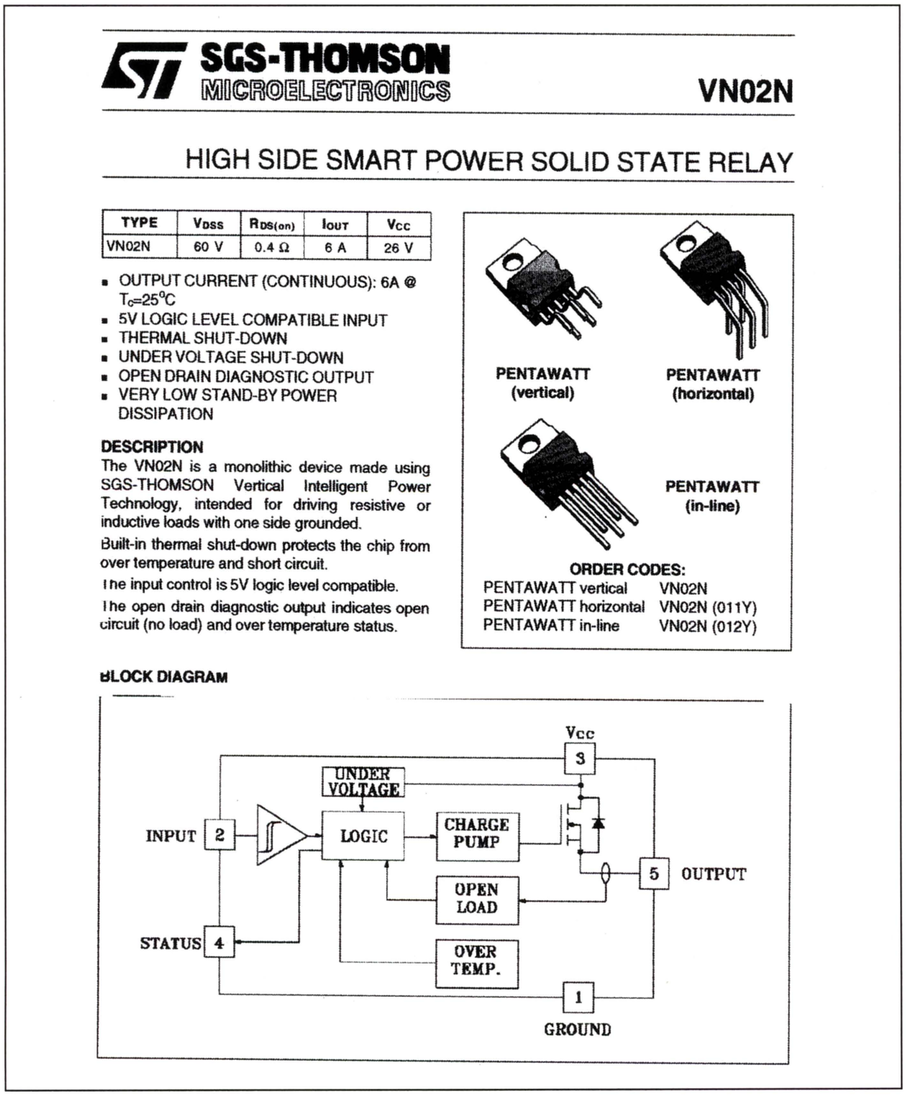


energizing a separate "lamp return" transistor that is connected to each lamp in the group. Each lamp return is a "row." In fact, the lamp return transistors are really our old friend the ground switch!

The lamp return transistors are the same type as those used to drive the solenoids–type TIP102. The lamp return transistor completes the ground circuit for each lamp. To light a single lamp, the lamp return circuit for that lamp is energized at the exact moment the column is sending out its pulse. The column provides the source path to the lamp, while the row provides the return path and Viola! We have a complete circuit and the lamp lights up. The computer then moves on to the next column, energizing it while simultaneously activating the appropriate row in order to light the lamps it wants to illuminate. The process repeats for all eight columns.

With the strobe circuit to drive them, the lamps are "refreshed" every eight milliseconds. During each refresh time, the selected lamps are given another pulse of current at +18 volts DC. Although the lamps are standard 6-volt lamps, the +18 volt pulse does not blow them out or cause them to glow too brightly. Remember, each pulse lasts just one millisecond. This short "duty cycle" prevents the filament in the lamp from getting too hot.

Also, despite the brief pulses they receive, the lamps do not appear to flicker. With a refresh rate of approximately 120 cycles per second (120 Hertz) the filament in the lamp will not cool enough to dim between pulses. Additionally, the human eye cannot perceive any flicker faster than about 50 hertz. Even if the bulbs flickered a bit, we wouldn't be able to see it.



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TYPE	V_{DSS}	$R_{DS(on)}$	I_{OUT}	V_{CC}
VN02N	60 V	0.4 Ω	6 A	26 V

- OUTPUT CURRENT (CONTINUOUS): 6A @ T_c=25°C
- 5V LOGIC LEVEL COMPATIBLE INPUT
- THERMAL SHUT-DOWN
- UNDER VOLTAGE SHUT-DOWN
- OPEN DRAIN DIAGNOSTIC OUTPUT
- VERY LOW STAND-BY POWER DISSIPATION

DESCRIPTION

The VN02N is a monolithic device made using SGS-THOMSON Vertical Intelligent Power Technology, intended for driving resistive or inductive loads with one side grounded.

Built-in thermal shut-down protects the chip from over temperature and short circuit.

The input control is 5V logic level compatible.

The open drain diagnostic output indicates open circuit (no load) and over temperature status.

PENTAWATT (vertical)

PENTAWATT (horizontal)

PENTAWATT (in-line)

ORDER CODES:

PENTAWATT vertical	VN02N
PENTAWATT horizontal	VN02N (011Y)
PENTAWATT in-line	VN02N (012Y)

BLOCK DIAGRAM

The advantage of the lamp matrix over the one-ground-switch-for-each-lamp method is obvious. The lamp matrix allows us to control 64 lamps using just 16 transistors and 16 wires connected to the lamp driver circuitry on the printed circuit board.

Short circuit protection: Shorted lamps and lamp sockets aren't uncommon. Without some type of protection circuitry, a short circuit in a single lamp could take out an entire column or row. To prevent that from happening (or at least reduce the likelihood) Williams has included a simple but effective over-current protection (OCP) circuit in the return path circuit.

Notice that the emitters of the TIP102 transistors in the row circuit aren't connected to ground directly but rather through a low value resistor of just a fraction of an ohm. .22 ohm to be exact. That's not very much resistance. What could that possibly do? Well, normally nothing. It's practically the same as grounding the emitter directly.

But if a lamp or lamp socket short circuits, there will be a dramatic rise in the amount of current flowing through the emitter of the TIP102 and through the .22 ohm resistor to ground. This will create a voltage across the resistor due to increased IR drop (V=IR). This voltage is applied to the inverted (-) input of the voltage comparitor U16 or U17, type LM339.

The non-inverted (+) input of all the comparitors is connected to a +1.4 volt reference source. When an LM339 is connected this way it has a very simple operation. The device compares the two inputs to see which one has the highest voltage. If the non-inverted input has the highest voltage, the output of the LM339 is +5 volts DC (actually, the output really swings up to Vcc which, in this case, is +5 volts DC). If the voltage at the inverted in the higher of the two, the output goes to ground.

So when a lamp or lamp socket shorts, the extra current causes the comparator's output to go to ground. This is, of course, a logical "0" or "low." This signal is then used to set a flip-flop (U12-U15). Since the base of the lamp return transistor is connected to the inverted output of the flip-flop, setting

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Randy Fromm's Arcade School 1944 Falmouth Dr. El Cajon, CA 92020-2827 TEL 619.593.6131 FAX 619.593.6132 the flip-flop causes the transistor to turn off. This breaks the return path, opening the circuit and preventing damage to either the column driver transistor or the row transistor.

All of the other lamps will continue to function as normal. It is only when the shorted lamp or lamp socket is energized that the OCP kicks in.

Sega pinball

Sega's lamp matrix is more or less the same as Williams' with a few differences. One is that instead of using an 8X8 matrix, Sega's is 8X10 with eight columns and 10 rows.

The column drivers are different. Instead of using a PNP darlington transistor, Sega uses a device known as a "high side driver." As the name implies, this device is specifically designed to drive the high side or source path of a circuit. The part number is VN02N.

This device has some definite advantages over a simple transistor. One is that the VN02N has built-in protection circuitry. It's kind of like the OCP circuit in the Williams system, but it detects high-current failures based on temperature rather than voltage drop. Part of the device is a temperature sensor, located in the precise spot where the temperature will rise when the load short circuits. As soon as the temperature rises to 140 degrees Celsius, the device automatically shuts down. When the temperature falls below 125 degrees, the device will automatically restart. Of course, if the short is still there, the device will reheat and cycle off and back on again and again until you get out there to fix it.

This is a good example of a situation where prompt service can save time and money. Since this device depends on getting hot for its protection circuit to kick in, it is continuously temperature cycling as long as the game is on. It becomes hot and cools down over and over again. This type of abuse is one of the things that can kill semiconductors. It's always best to get to your repairs as soon as possible.

Another advantage of using the VN02N over a transistor is its unique status output. The status output alerts the CPU when a load is open (such as a broken wire or open lamp filament) or when the device has gone into thermal shutdown. The computer can then alert the operator to take the proper corrective action. The VN02N drivers are controlled by a simple octal latch (U18).

On the return path side, the Sega system uses MOSFETs instead of conventional bipolar transistors. MOSFETs work well in a circuit like this due to their very low voltage drop when fully energized. Eight of the lamp return MOSFETs are controlled by another octal latch (U6), while the remaining two are controlled by a dual flip-flop (U209).

Troubleshooting

Troubleshooting the lamp matrix is usually pretty easy. The first thing you do is to carefully identify the exact problem. By the nature of its construction, switch matrix problems lend themselves to easy diagnoses. Are there a number of lamps that are not working (bulbs OK, of course)? Are they common to one column or row? Sounds like a good place to start, huh? Check the corresponding column or row driver. You can usually find failures quickly using the diode test setting of your meter to check the transistors or MOSFETs. Even the VN02N can be checked this way.

FELLOW TECHNICIANS WARNING: I'm happy to admit my screw-ups if it prevents anyone else from making the same mistake. If you have blown drivers, carefully check the lamp matrix itself (playfield, backbox, and cabinet) for the cause of the problem before you reinstall and fire-up the board you just finished troubleshooting and repairing. You might (probably do) have a short somewhere. Maybe a lamp socket shorted to ground or even to a solenoid.

I was so happy to have fixed the board ("Gee, boss . . . It worked perfectly in the shop") that I just threw it into the machine on location without a second thought as to WHY the lamp driver circuit had been reduced to a little pile of charcoal. Needless to say, as soon as I fired the game up, I had to replace the parts once again. On the bright side, I now know what exploding transistors smell like!

Hints: Visually examine every lamp in the bad column or row. Look for places where the socket touches a metal bracket or solenoid terminal. Remember, things MOVE in a pinball machine. Might the short circuit happen only when a feature such as a kicker or ball launcher is activated? Look in the area of the prop stick!!

The author's shameless plug for the Monitor Club: I have secured distribution rights for Sharp Image, Eygo, Wells-Gardner, and even Hantarex monitors. That's right. Hantarex is back in the USA and Randy Fromm's Monitor Club has 'em. In my opinion, the image quality of Hantarex monitors is unsurpassed.

The concept of the Monitor Club is simple. With the combined buying power of my fellow technicians and operators across the country, the Monitor Club will offer monitors at the lowest price possible to all. Quantity discounts have already been applied, even if you buy just one monitor. Buy one or 100, the price is the same.

To keep costs low, all orders must be pre-paid. The Monitor Club is not a stocking distributor. Your monitor will be drop-shipped directly from the manufacturer or manufacturer's representative. As such, there are no C.O.D.s possible. Contact Randy Fromm's Monitor Club for the exact shipping charges since your monitor will be shipped from various locations depending on what you have ordered.

For those of you online, I have a new free service for answering your technical questions. You may chat with me directly via a program called ICQ. Download at (http://icq.com). My ICQ number is 10591073. If your computer has a camera, we can video conference via CUseeme as well. It sometimes helps when trying to describe a component or symptom. Embrace technology! (Welcome to the new millennium.)

That's all for now. See you at the Arcade School! ▲

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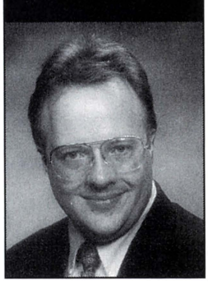


Not a lot of AIR

A group of games that should be required in family fun centers is Meltec's classic series, which consists of *Boom Ball, Knock Down, Big Mouth, Great Frog Race,* and *Shoot Out.* All of these games operate using compressed air, which makes them an attraction with the "WOOSH" sound as balls are shot out of the cannon.

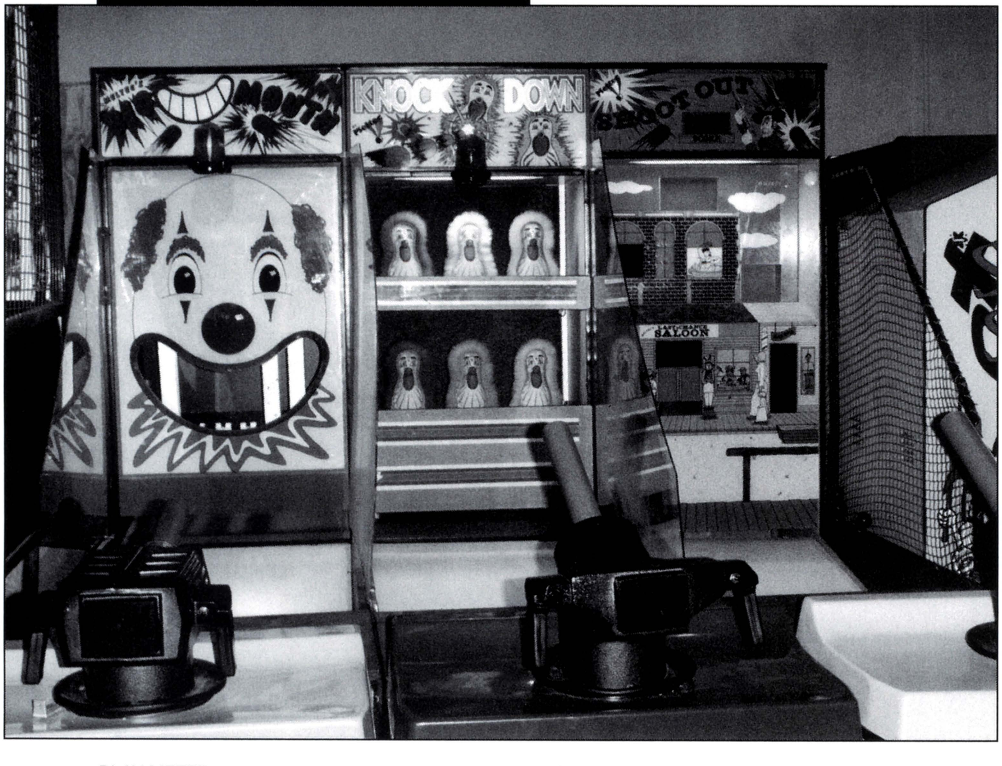
Because these games are more mechanical in design than electronic, it would seem they would be prone to more down time. This is not the case. Preventive maintenance, TLC, and basic upkeep have kept Meltec games earning for the last 20 years.

Since all Meltec games operate using compressed air, obviously an air compressor is required. The size of the air compressor and the number of games are two important factors. Meltec games all have a basic air requirement of 90 PSI (Pounds of air per Square Inch). Any less and your compressor is working overtime.

My rule of thumb for purchasing the right air compressor is to figure each game needs at least a 20-gallon size. For example, for three Meltec games, you should purchase a 60-gallon air compressor. Don't forget to figure in whether you use the air compressor for other games. Also, keep this in mind: The ideal cycle for an air compressor is 50 percent on and 50 percent off. If the on time is any longer, the air compressor might fail prematurely.

Basic filtering and drying the compressed air is required; the cleaner the air, the fewer problems you'll have in the long run. The early failure of the air valves is a clue that your air is not being cleaned properly. When dirt gets into the air system, causing a valve to stick, sometimes for over 30 seconds, it will cause misfires or, what I call, airballs. If you are experiencing this problem be careful because this delayed reaction of a bad valve on a cylinder might cause serious harm.

Meltec games are a must in any FEC.



Ball-loading system

In early 1982 Meltec redesigned the ball-loading mechanism for the *Boom Ball* game and continued to use this new mechanism on all subsequent games. It is more trouble-free than the old conveyor belt system. However, one FEC nearby has 15 original *Boom Ball* games with the old conveyor belt system, and all are still running strong.

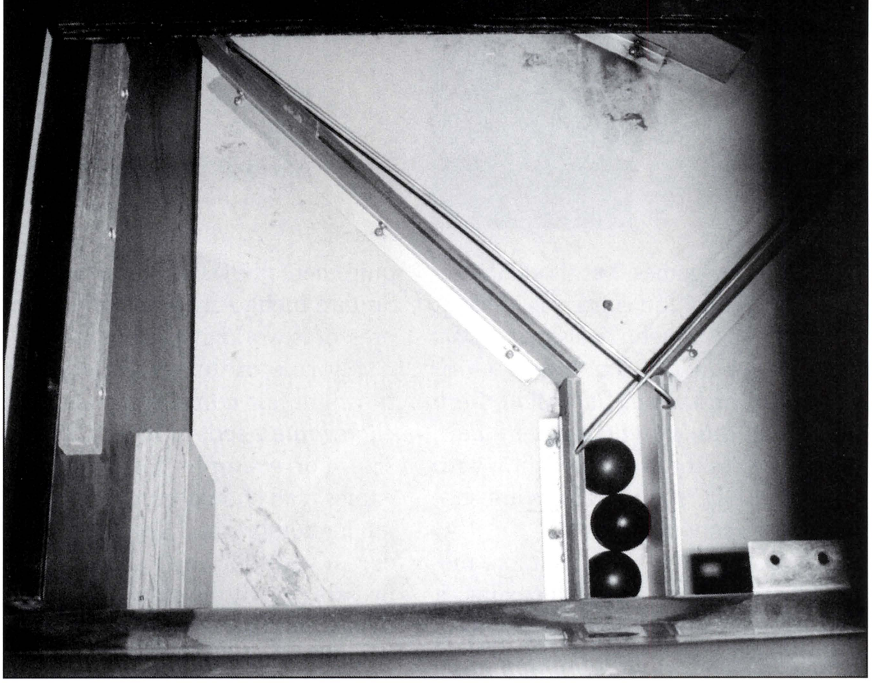
The balls used in all of the Meltec games are black, two inches in diameter, and have a Teflon coating. This Teflon coating allows the balls to roll smoothly through the loading mechanism and keeps them from binding with other balls in the ball tube. After a few years of extensive use and frequent handling, the Teflon coating will rub off causing the balls to jam. At this point there are two options, one temporary and the other more permanent.

The temporary solution is to respray the balls with Teflon coating, available in a spray can at most auto parts stores. The second option is to purchase new balls, which will keep the games earning strong for a few more years with few problems with sticking and jamming. Happ Controls (1-888-BUY-HAPP) is the authorized reseller of the Meltec balls.

Be cautious about buying from other sources. There is a ball made in Japan that looks just like the original Meltec ball. But it lacks a really good Teflon coating. If you use this ball in your games, expect headaches, higher maintenance costs, and more downtime.

Strong wire will keep balls from jumping the walls.

Photo 1



Light bulbs

You probably stock most of the light bulbs used in Meltec games because they are used in many other games. The standard F15T8CW fluorescent lamp, a household 40-watt lamp, and the #44 lamp are used to illuminate the various marquees. One other bulb, a bayonet style 10-watt lamp used on the various marquees and in the winner light, is somewhat exotic, but is probably stocked by major game parts distributors.

Ball-loader assembly

The new (well, not brand new now) ball-loader assembly is quite simple. The balls roll into a single file chute area where an air cylinder with a hollowed out cup (called the ball gate) on the end holds the ball and pushes it up and into the ball tube. Balls inside the ball tube are spaced so the topmost ball inside the cannon is directly over the air output nozzle inside the cannon.

With a blast of air from the boom valve, the front ball is pushed out of the cannon and toward the targets. Because the ball gate is screwed onto the ball lift cylinder, Lock Tight must be used. When tightening the ball gate to the lift cylinder shaft, do not use slip-joint pliers because they will mark the cylinder shaft with the pliers' teeth. These marks will cause the lift cylinder to operate incorrectly or slugglishly. I recommend that you wrap a cloth around the pliers when you tighten the ball gate to the cylinder shaft.

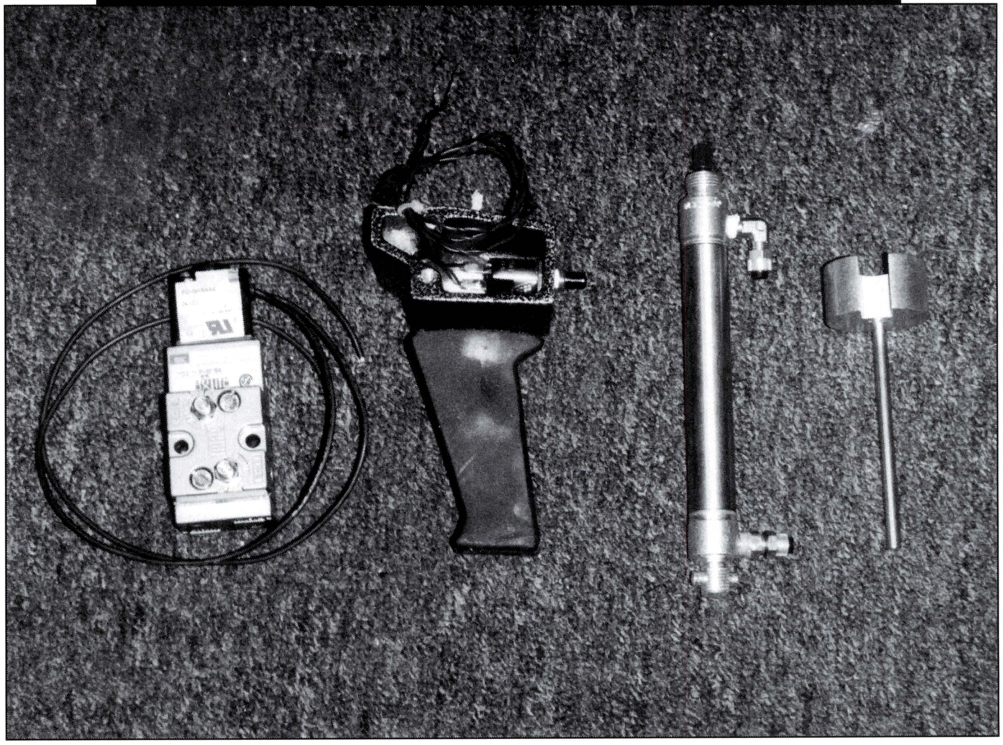
Air balls, air shots, dead shots, or two balls shot out of the cannon at the same time cause problems like not having enough balls in the game, or the ball gate comes unscrewed from the lift cylinder. When the ball gate unscrews itself from the lift cylinder, the spacing inside the ball tube is off. This puts a ball too low or too high in front of the boom valve air nozzle inside the cannon and will not shoot properly.

Like any game, preventive maintenance is necessary and should follow a schedule such as the scheduled maintenance chart inside each Meltec manual. This chart lists the time frame for checking and cleaning each of your Meltec games. Keeping up with the scheduled maintenance will reduce downtime.

Ticket dispenser

The ticket dispenser used on all Meltec games is the industry standard—Deltronic Labs' DL-1275 dispenser. The ticket-out light on the front plate seems to grow legs and walk off. Gluing the plastic light shield in place is not acceptable since it must be removed to replace the light bulb. One fix is to remove the

From left: Ball Gate, Lift Cylinder, Handle with Switch, and Air Valve.



light and socket and use a large-head bolt to cover the hole. If you feel you need the ticket-low light, consider replacing the socket with a small illuminated push-button, Don't use the push-button function, just use the light as a ticket-low light.

The handles used to play the games require more attention. The handles are all the same from game to game; only the finish and color change. The handles loosen up from all the use, so use a lock washer or some Lock Tight on the two bolts that secure the handle to the cannon. The nut that secures the "fire" push-button to the handle also tends to loosen up. Again, a small amount of Lock Tight will end that problem.

> ***"Preventive maintenance, TLC, and basic upkeep have kept Meltec games earning for the last 20 years."***

On the three Meltec games we have in our FEC, we found a problem with the balls rolling too fast toward the gun after being fired into the ball chute. A ball sitting still would act as a ramp for the faster rolling ball. Once the fast rolling ball hit the stationary ball, the fast rolling ball would hop over the stationary ball, get airborne, and hop over the wood guides where the ball would sit unused. To remedy this problem I purchased some thick wire, the kind used to strengthen chain link fences. This wire is over 1/16-inch thick and is very hard to cut. I bent and cut it to form a higher wall (see photo 1) so airborne balls would hit the wire and bounce back.

A second alternative is to place a screen over the entire wood divider assembly so no ball is able to get over the wood divider. The new *Knock Down 2000* and *Big Mouth 2000* games already have a screen in place to prevent this problem.

Overall, the Meltec games are reliable and fun to play. If you have any comments or questions, I can be reached at Vicco electronics (760) 322-4000 or by e-mail at (Vic@Vicco.com). ▲

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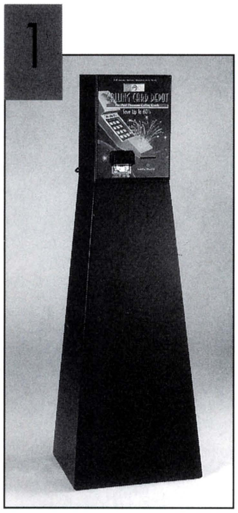

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INTERNATIONAL SCENE

IGT ACQUIRES BARCREST LTD. FROM BASS PLC

International Game Technology of Reno, Nev., announced the purchase of Manchester, England-based Barcrest Ltd., manufacturer and supplier of electronic gaming devices. The company was purchased from Bass PLC by IGT-U.K., a wholly-owned subsidiary of IGT for $70 million..

"IGT's acquisition of Barcrest is important for two reasons," said IGT president and chief operating officer G. Thomas Baker. "First, it gives IGT the immediate capability to compete in the worldwide AWP market. Secondly, it increases our creative resources for the development of IGT products in all markets. Barcrest's industry leadership results from its talented employees, and we are proud to welcome them into the IGT family."

For more information, contact IGT, (702)688-0100.

BACTA REQUESTS HIGHER PAYOUT ON AWPS

According to AB Europe, the United Kingdom trade association BACTA has asked for an increase in payout limits as part of its Triennial Review submission. This would be up from the current $16 limit. According to BACTA, research shows that customers expect prizes to exceed the current limit. The Gaming Board is expected to make its recommendations to the Home Office this summer.

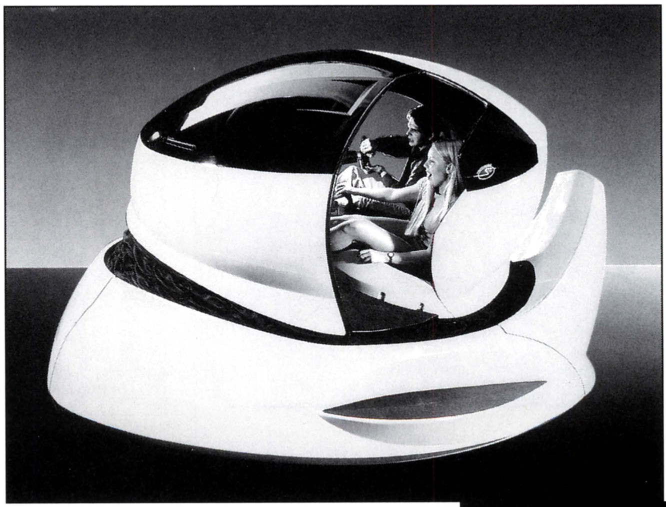
IMA OFFERS SERVICES TO EXHIBITORS

IMA organizers, Miller Freeman, have intensified their measures to provide the best possible service to exhibitors. "We as fair organizers consider it essential that we play our part in ensuring that the IMA is a business success for every single company," said event director Petra Lassahn.

Services include a choice of which of the eight halls in which to exhibit, a new partnership with Danzas to provide even better and safer transportation of exhibits, and an admission ticket voucher system in which exhibitors can order any number of tickets but pay only for those redeemed at the show. In addition, there is a new type of brochure which the exhibiting companies can use to invite their customers to IMA.

For more information on the show or these new services, contact Miller Freeman, 49 211-90191-183; Web site (www.ima-messe.com).

VIRTUAL CITY GETS INTO SIMULATION



Thomson's Venturer S2

Taiwan's Virtual City Entertainment Corp. has made a big move into simulation with an order for four Venturer S2 interactive machines from Thomson Entertainment.

The electric motion base systems will be installed in Virtual City's SpacePort 9 ultra high-tech entertainment complex in a beachside area of Hengchun Town near Taipei. With over 120,000 square feet devoted to creating an indoor science fiction/fantasy environment, SpacePort 9 delivers the latest in healthy, educational entertainment to the increasingly discerning Asian leisure consumer, according to the company.

All four simulators will be delivered with *Millennium Odyssey*, the first game developed exclusively for the Venturer S2i. the game can be played by one or two people using steering wheel and joystick controls to "fly" the simulator and en-

Users' Reports

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"The first two Token Techs are excellent. We are sending our purchase order for six additional units."

"It's working just perfect. We love it!"

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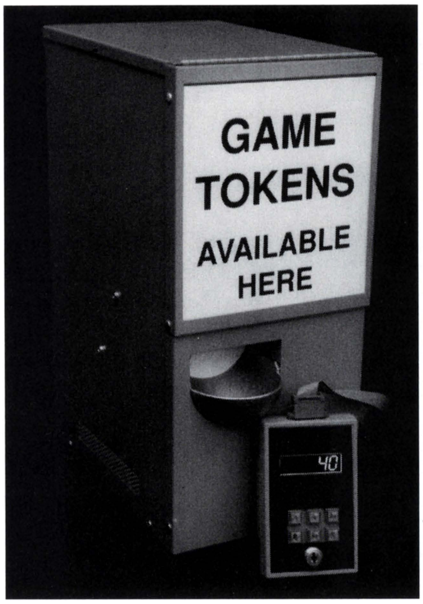
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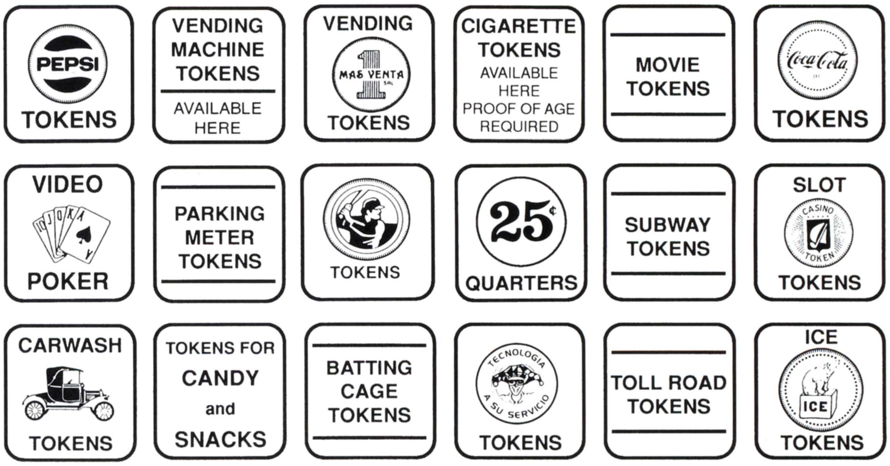
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JULY 27-30
China Amusement Expo, Beijing, PRC. Call (852)2865-2633; fax (852)2866-1770.

AUGUST 5-6
EXIME, World Trade Center, Mexico City, Mexico. Call W.T. Glasgow Inc., (708)333-9292; fax (708)333-4086.

AUGUST 14-17
TAMA-GTI Expo '98, Taipei World Trade Center, Taipei, Taiwan. Call Lauren Swartz, +886-2-2760-7407; fax +886-2-2762-3873.

AUGUST 26-28
Asian Amusement Expo, Singapore International Convention and Exhibition Centre, Singapore. Call (703)836-4800, ext. 766; fax (703)836-4801.

gage various weapons. More successful players can progress to a second level and record their scores in the Hall of Fame.

ILW STRENGTHENS ITS MANAGEMENT TEAM

International Leisure Industry Week (LIW), billed by its sponsors as Britain's biggest and most comprehensive business-to-business event to the out-of-home industry, has announced a series of new appointments to strengthen its management team.

Nicky Buss has joined LIW as manager of the Leisure Hospitality show. She was most recently with Hotelympia, a catering industry show. Joining Nicky is Sandra Hanbury, who previously worked for the Barbour Index and comes from a publishing background. The final appointment is Karen Dodd, who joins LIW from Volvo.

Angela Snape remains as LIW's show director along with her team of Lindsay Bunce and Neil Felton. For information on LIW, to be held Oct. 6-8 in NEC Birmingham, contact LIW, 44 (0) 171 263 3275.

EXIME SET FOR AUGUST IN MEXICO CITY

William Glasgow of William T. Glasgow Inc., organizers of the EXIME show, has issued a press release outlining the benefits of attending this event scheduled for Aug. 5-6 at the Exposicion Internacional de Maquinas de Entretenimiento in Mexico City.

Here are some of the reasons mentioned for attending EXIME, which has, since its 1990 debut, remained constant in its mission to develop Mexico's rich potential for amusement products. Growth of the Mexican economy has been on the upswing every quarter since 1996; as a result of the strengthening economy, Mexican wages are increasing; increased wages combined with a stronger economy show stronger public spending; consumer buying power has returned to pre-devaluation levels; and 1997 was a recovery year.

All these factors, the press release notes, point toward a more affluent Mexican public with more pesos to spend on leisure activities. For more information, contact William T. Glasgow Inc., (708)333-9292; fax (708)333-4086; e-mail (wtglasgow@aol.com).

MILLENNIUM EXHIBITS AT JATX98 SHOW

The Millennium Amusement Group exhibited at the first Jeddah Amusement Trade Expo held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia the end of April. Millennium exhibited its line of remote controlled boats and trucks in addition to its electronic shooting galleries.

"We are thrilled with the results of the show," reported CEO Richard DeVuono. "We feel there is a large market for our equipment and we are already planning to expand our booth space and exhibits for next year."

Millennium also announced that Saudi Brothers Commercial Co. has agreed to be its exclusive agent in the Middle East. Saudi Brothers Commercial is a well respected company in the Middle East with vast business interests including eight amusement parks and a number of indoor family fun centers, noted DeVuono. For more information, contact Millennium, (407)384-8913; fax (407)384-8847; e-mail (devuon29@aol.com).

TREASURE COVE

From left: Maher Mohammed Al-Nowaiser of Saudi Brothers, Jerry Balentine of Millennium, Abdulaziz Mohammed Al-Nowaiser of Saudi Brothers, and Richard DeVuono of Millennium at the Jeddah Expo.

ASIAN AMUSEMENT EXPO

ThemeLine, the official newsletter for the Asian Amusement Expo, reports that leisure industry professionals are upbeat about prospects for growth in Asia, despite the much-touted economic downturn. "Hotspots for development in India and Southeast Asia are being fueled by the growth of the middle classes in these countries, said Julie Cramer of Attractions Management magazine, quoting C.T. Hsu of Florida-based C.T. Hsu International.

The Asian Amusement Expo is slated for Aug. 26-28 at the Singapore International Convention and Exhibition Centre. For more information, call (65) 322-2754; fax (65)226-3264; or e-mail (tonyc@aic-asia.com). ▲

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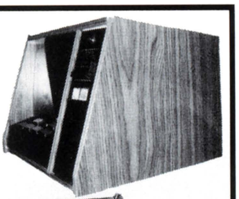

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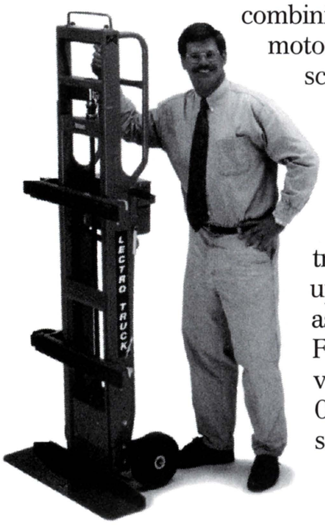
This material handling device enables one person—with literally the push of a button—to lift, control, and safely move loads weighing up to 1,500 pounds. It is as portable as a standard hand truck.

For more information, contact Innovative Moving Systems, (800)619-0625; fax (920)564-2322; Web site (www.lectrotruck.com).

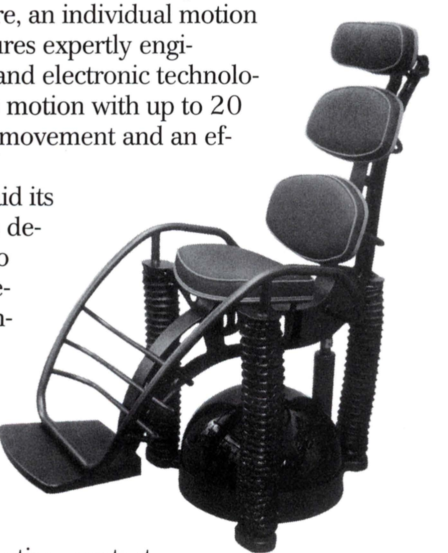


SIMULATION RIDE THEATRE

Studysim Ltd. introduces the Simpulse Simulation Ride Theatre, an individual motion seat system. It features expertly engineered pneumatic and electronic technology giving three axis motion with up to 20 degrees of angular movement and an effective lift.

The company said its strategy behind the design program was to provide rapid movements precisely controlled, with an innovatively styled seat resulting in a product to enhance the ride experience of customers.

For more information, contact Studysim Ltd., phone and fax (44) 1293-527-284.



TOO COOL

Astro Carpet Mills introduces Too Cool, a vibrant, futuristic looking carpet for high-energy arcades, gaming areas, video stores, and theaters. Too Cool, a copyrighted pattern exclusive to Astro Carpet, has kid appeal and is available in a black background with bright yellow, purple, pink, red, and turquoise accents.

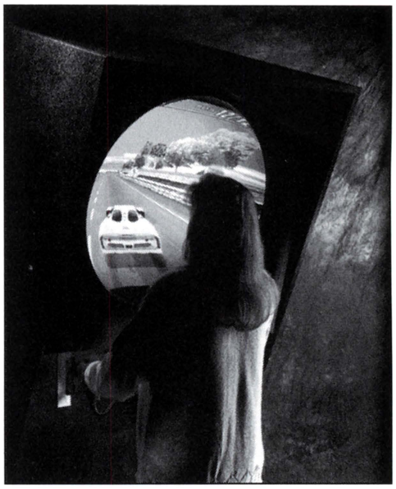
Too Cool is constructed of dense cut pile stain-resistant 100 percent nylon and treated with Scotchgard for easier cleaning. Too Cool is designed to withstand heavy commercial traffic and is virtually kid-proof hiding bubble gum, colas, and dirt.

For more information, contact Astro Carpet, (800)542-4189.

SURROUNDVIEW

RediFun, with years of experience in the aircraft visual simulation business and the amusement supply industry, introduces the SurroundView full hemisphere visual presentation technology. Utilizing a patent-pending innovation, it accepts all video formats, including HDTV digital. Operation can be in equipment of all shapes and sizes, from gallery-size interactive exhibits and large arcade games to desktop or portable devices.

For more information, contact RediFun, (817)421-2864; fax (817)421-6425; e-mail (gcaddell@worldnet.att.net).



VENDING MACHINE PRICE CATALOG

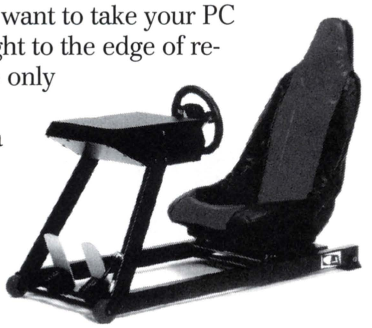
Hanna Co. introduces what it describes as the first wholesale vending machine price catalog, featuring a comprehensive array of the most highly recognized and popular brands and models available in today's market. It includes manual bulk vending machines, impulse games, manual and electronic countertop snack, soda, sports cards, fun stickers, and combination snack/soda machines, and full size vending equipment. The catalog also answers numerous frequently asked questions about vending machines and opportunities in the vending industry.

The company notes that this is its answer to those faced with business opportunity promises to make you rich with offers of starting your own company with the purchase of vending equipment. They say that these offers usually require victims to pay up to 500 percent over the value of the machines. In many cases, the victims of these scams may not receive any vending equipment whatsoever. This valuable reference catalog will stop the scam artists from preying on unsuspecting victims. Those interested in getting into the vending business will have information they can use.

For more information, contact Hanna Co., (913)469-8278; fax (913)451-0008; Web site (www.hanna-vending.com).

VIRTUAL VEHICLE SIMULATOR

Interactive I/O introduces the Virtual Vehicle Simulator. *Computer Life* magazine describes it like this: "If you're a



racing purist and you want to take your PC driving experience right to the edge of realism, this setup is the only way to go."

This is the first in a series of simulators from Interactive I/O which immerse the user in the fast moving world of interactive computer games. Designed by computer and racing enthusiasts, the Virtual Vehicle has an ergonomic and tactile feel that maximizes the experience of today's (and tomorrow's) most popular racing software.

The Virtual Vehicle features an adjustable seat and pedal position, built-in monitor stand, dampened steering, leather wrapped race wheel, authentic racing seat, push-button shifting, and high grade components.

For more information, contact Interactive I/O, (714)921-0994; fax (714)921-2393.

HIGH-SPEED PRINTER

Ithaca Peripherals introduces a series of new impact printers designated the Series 150. This series will include the Model 151 (a receipt printer), the 152 (a receipt/journal printer), and the 153 (a receipt/journal/15-line validation printer). They are the fastest in their class with print speeds of up to 9.5 lines per second.

In addition to fast speed, the standard Series 150 features include simple paper loading, APA Bit Map Graphics, self-diagnostics, Epson ESC/POS, Microline and IBM emulations, dual cash drawer drivers with status, and snap-on ribbon cassette.

For more information, contact Ithaca Peripherals, (607)257-8901; fax (607)257-8922.

DUAL VEND PHONE CARD DISPENSER AND TWO NEW VENDING MACHINES

Brandmakers Inc. and The Lift Ticket announce the continuation of production of their dual vend phone card dispensing machine for $895 including a pedestal. No adjustment is required for card thickness and each dispensing module has 8-1/2" of ticket space. Two different cards may be dispensed in varying denominations and the bill acceptor with a stacker takes $1, $5, $10, and $20 bills.

The two also are introducing two new vending machines, a postcard dispensing machine with postage so the picture postcards are ready to mail; and a machine to dispense computer discs and copy cards.

For more information, contact Brandmakers/The Lift Ticket, (770)368-9042; fax (770)368-8327. ▲

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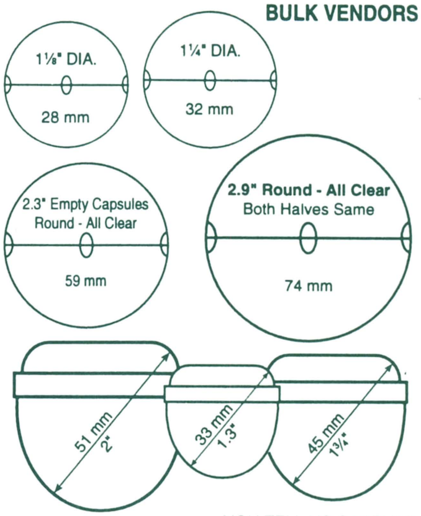
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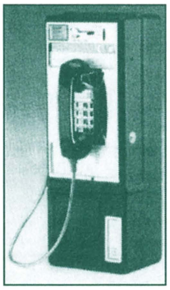

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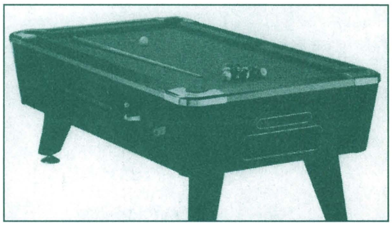

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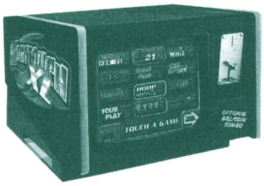

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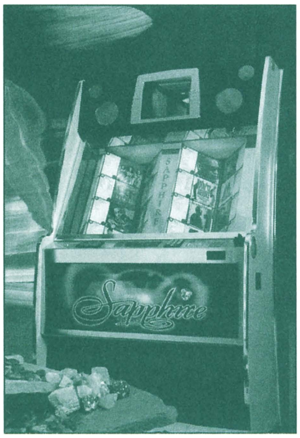

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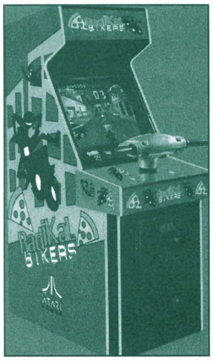

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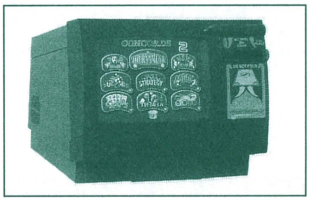

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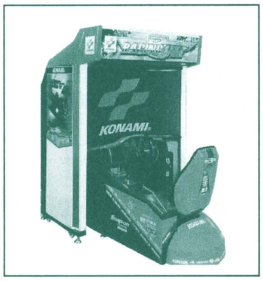

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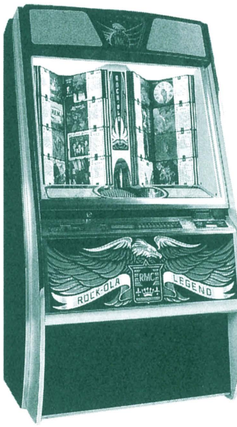

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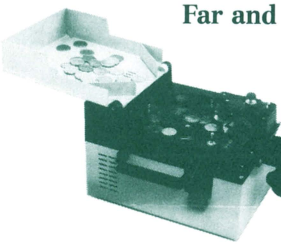

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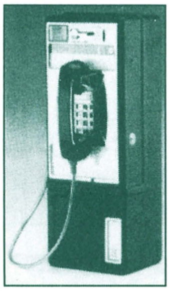

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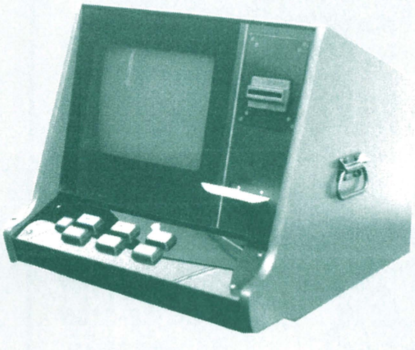

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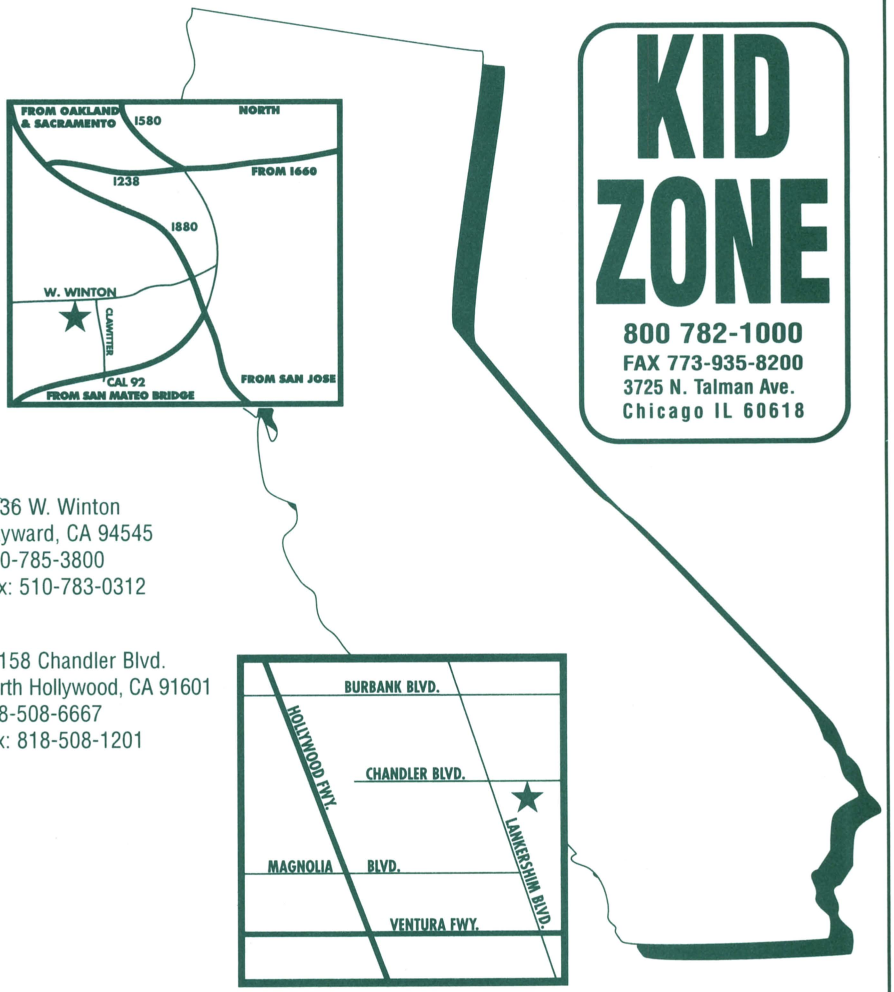
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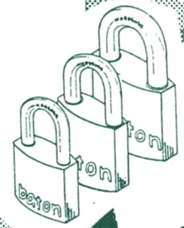

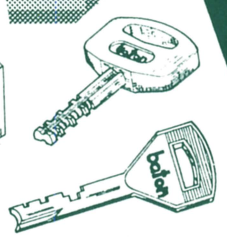

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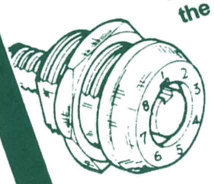

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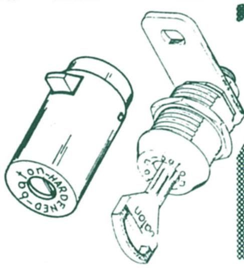

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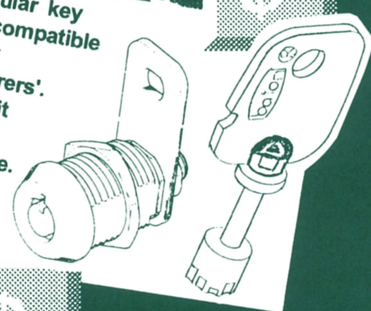

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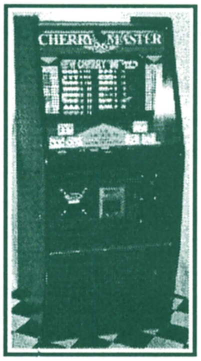

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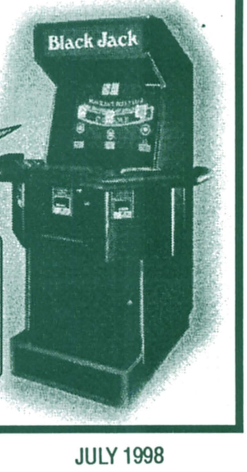

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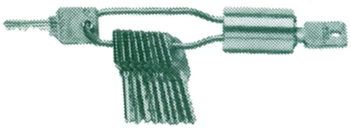

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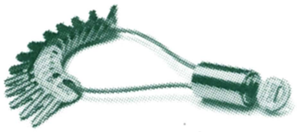

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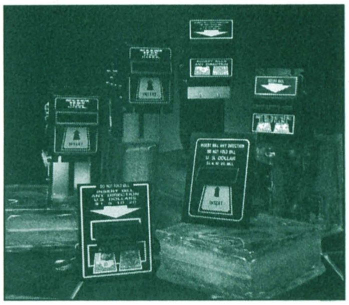

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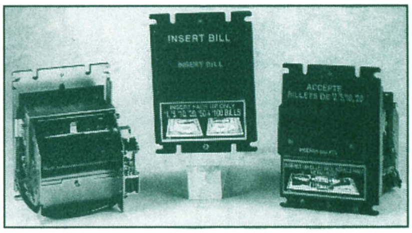

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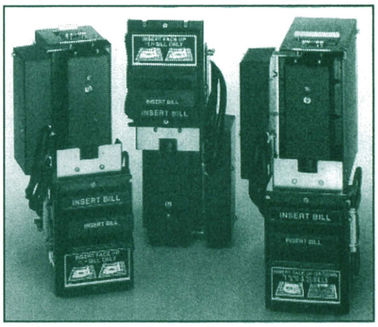

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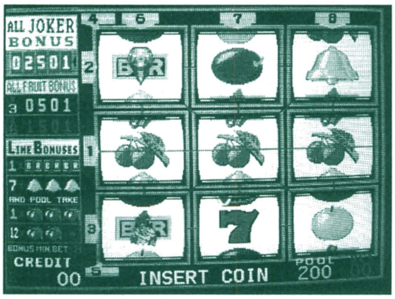

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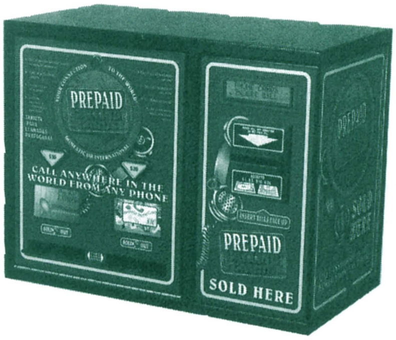

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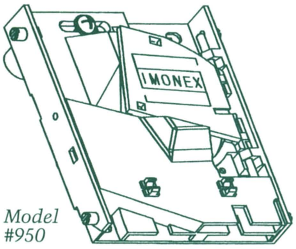

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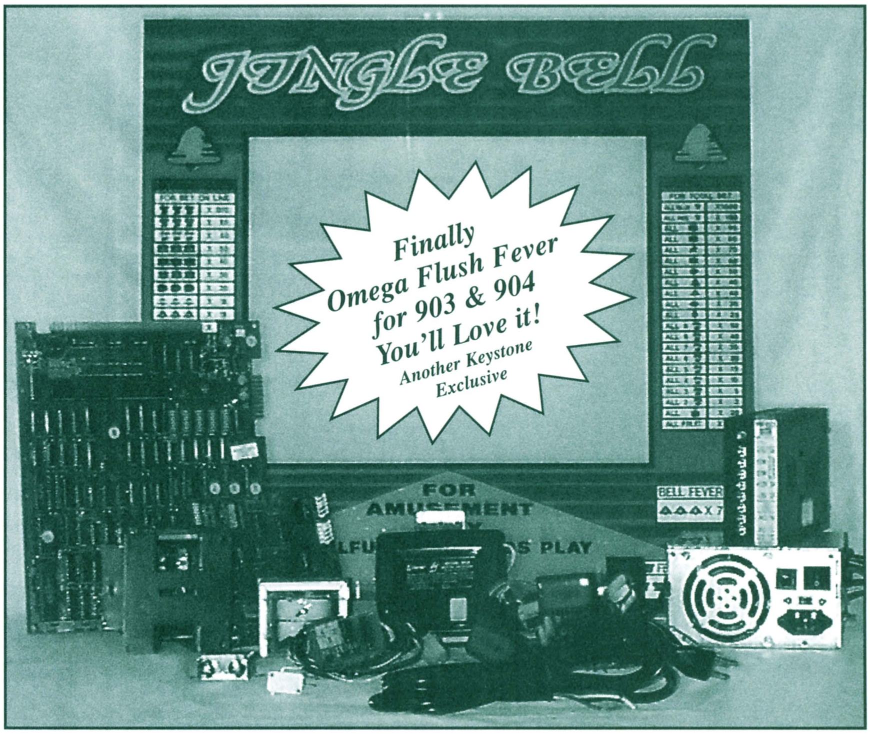

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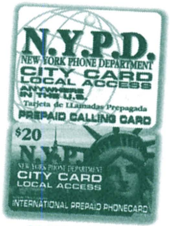
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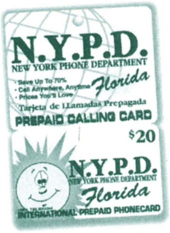
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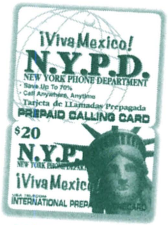
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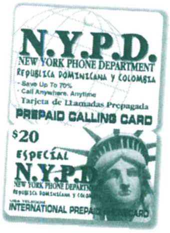
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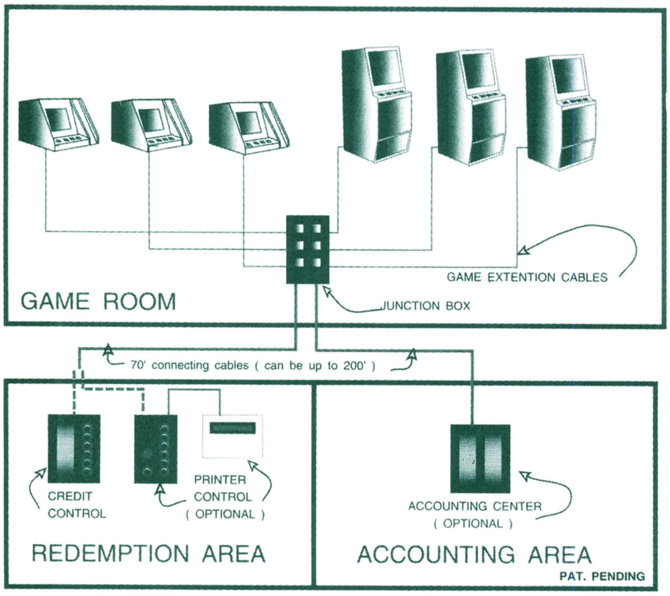
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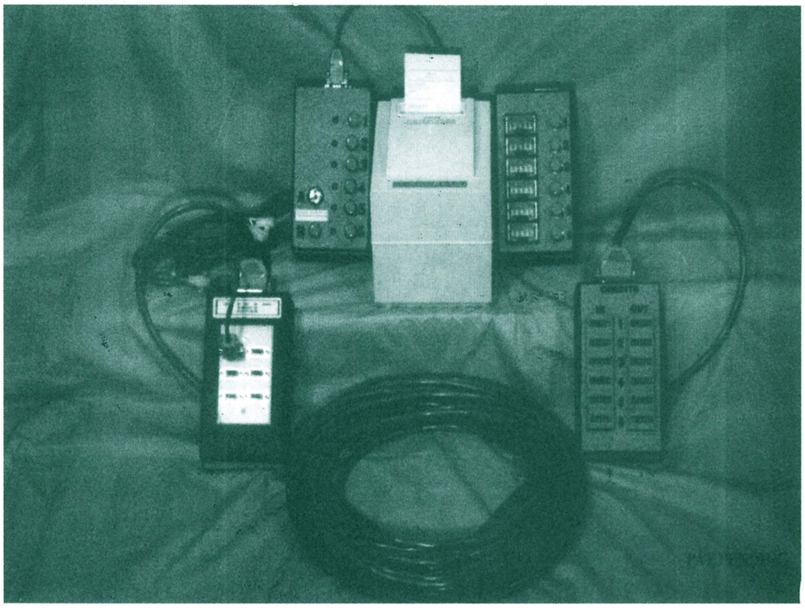

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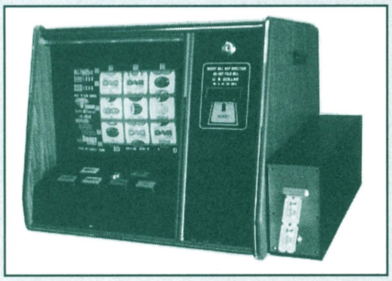

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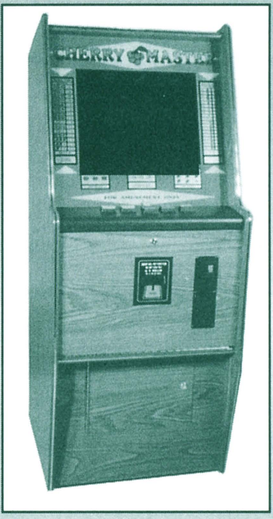

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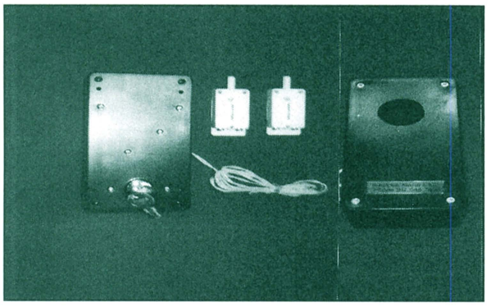

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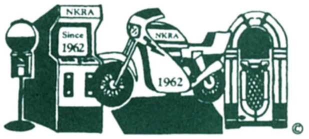

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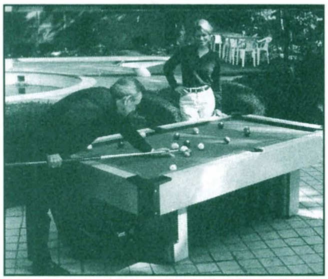

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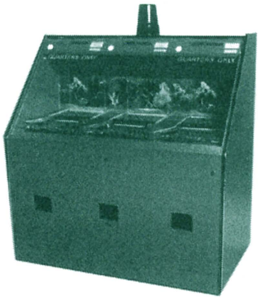

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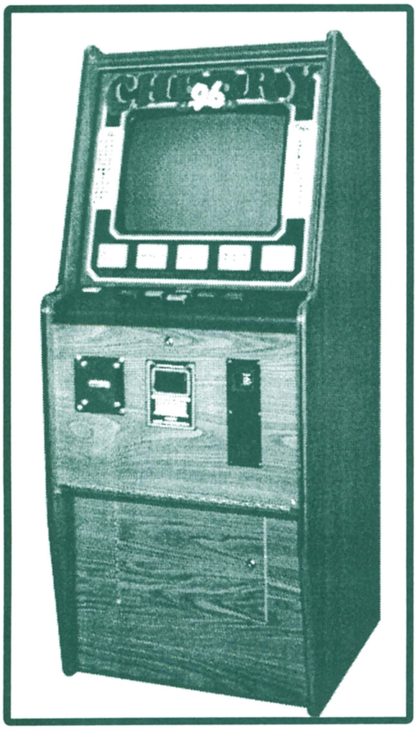

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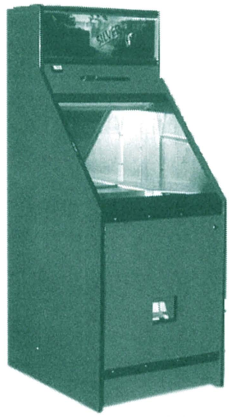

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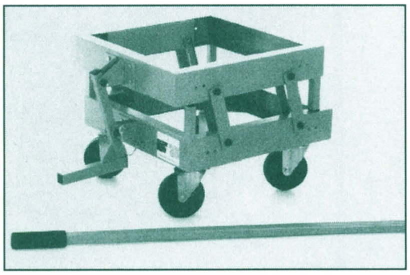

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1	8	15	22	29
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800 Big Town Mall Expo Hall Mesquite, TX	National Guard Armory 1670 Rt. 38 East Mt. Holly, NJ	Lakewood Exhibition Ctr. 2000 Lakewood Atlanta, GA	Central FL Fgrds Exhibit Hall 4603 W. Colonial Drive Orlando FL	2116 E. Walnut Ave. Fullerton, CA

SEPTEMBER

5	12	19	26
SAN JOSE, CA	**ST. LOUIS, MO AREA**	**FULLERTON, CA**	**DETROIT, MI**
Santa Clara Fairground Fiesta Hall 344 Tully Rd., San Jose	1355 S. Fifth Street Exhibition Hall St. Charles, MO	2116 E. Walnut Ave. Fullerton, CA	MI State Fairground Expo Ctr 1120 W. State Fair Ave. Community Arts Bldg.

OCTOBER

3	10	17	24
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NOVEMBER

14	21	28
ST. LOUIS, MO AREA	**ATLANTA, GA**	**FULLERTON, CA**
1355 S. Fifth Street Exhibition Hall St. Charles, MO	Lakewood Exhibition Ctr. 2000 Lakewood Atlanta, GA	2116 E. Walnut Ave. Fullerton, CA

DECEMBER

5	12	19
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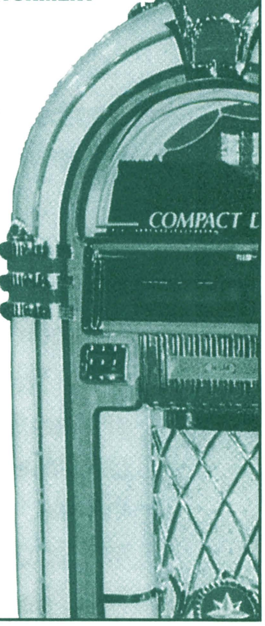

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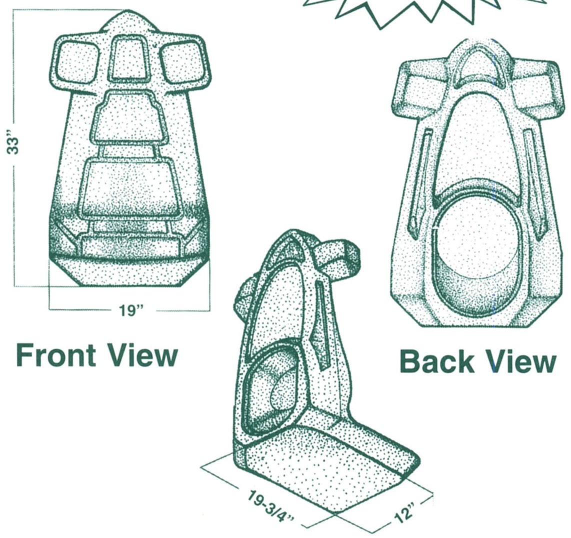

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	2	2	"Marco Antonio Solis"	Marco
	3	NEW	"Mojado"	Como Pez En El Agua
	4	NEW	"Nek"	Nek
	5	4	"Luis Miguel"	Romances
	6	6	"Enrique Iglesias"	Vivir
	7	8	"Juan Gabriel"	Celebrando 25 Anos
	8	3	"Mana"	Suenos Liquidos
	9	NEW	"Jose Luis Rodriguez"	Inolvidable
	10	7	"Los Mismos"	Te Llevas Mi Vida
REGIONAL MEXICAN	1	NEW	"Ezequiel Pena"	Nomas Contigo
	2	NEW	"Ana Gabriel"	Con Un Mismo Corazon
	3	6	"Jose Guadalupe Esparza"	Jose Guadalupe Esparza
	4	3	"Banda Arkangel R-15"	LA 4X4
	5	8	"Vicente Fernandez"	Estatua De Marfil
	6	NEW	"Banda El Recodo"	Pa'puros Compas Vol. II
	7	2	"Los Tigres Del Norte"	Asi Como Tu
	8	4	"Los Huracanes Del Norte"	Aires De Mi Norte
	9	NEW	"Pancho Barraza"	El Vagabundo Que Te Ama
	10	7	"Pepe Aguilar"	Por Mujeres Como Tu
TEJANO	1	1	"Los Angeles Azules"	Confesiones De Amor
	2	3	"Conjunto Primavera"	De Nueva a Tu Lado
	3	NEW	"Los Palominos"	Te Seguire
	4	NEW	"Los Invasores"	20 Grandes Exitos
	5	2	"Ramon Ayala"	20 Exitos Gigantes
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AD INDEX

For advertiser ***Hyperlinks*** visit: **www.playmeter.com**

AdvantEdge Vending	140
AGE	155
American Changer	85
AMOA Expo	80
Antique Apparatus/Rock-Ola	11
Arachnid	53
Asahi Seiko	93
Atari Games	Cover 4, 33
ATM Distributing	133
Bally	37
Bob's Space Racers	134
Bubblegum Park	34
Cadillac Jack	9
Coastal Amusements	59
Coin ConneXion	101
Design Plus Industries	124
Dyna Co., Ltd.	63
Dynamo	81
EMT	45
Fun Co.	159
Fun Expo	115
Fun Inudustries	31
Fun Merchants	17
GameMax	95
GameVision	39, 40
Great American Recreation	72
Hoffman Mint	20
Holoplex	75
IAAPA Expo	97
ICE	55
Imperial International	6
Impulse Amusements	50
Incredible Technologies	67
Island Design	61
Kevin Sharpe	41
Kiddie Rides USA	13
Kiddie's Manufacturing	89
KidzKart	127
King Plush	27
Konami	35
LazerTron	29
LBE Systems	15
Mars Electronics	25
Mayoni Enterprises	107
Merit Industries	7, 23
Midway	49
Muncie Novelty	10
Namco	71
National Crane Network/Plush-4-Play	57
NET	127
New Orleans Novelty	145
NSM America	51
O.K. Manufacturing	109
Ohio Coin Machine Association	43
Opus Entertainment	73
Premier Data Service	21
Quick Silver	18
Randy Fromm's Arcade School	151
Republic	140
Roger Williams Mint	119
Rowe International	Cover 3
S&B Toys & Novelties	68
Scan Coin	18
Sega GameWorks	Cover 2
Seidel Amusement Machine Co.	69
Silent Partner	161
Skee-Ball	91
SNK	47
Stricor	5
TouchTunes	19
United Machine Co.	65
United Plush	145
Van Brook of Lexington	76, 157
Video Systems	77
World of Games	87

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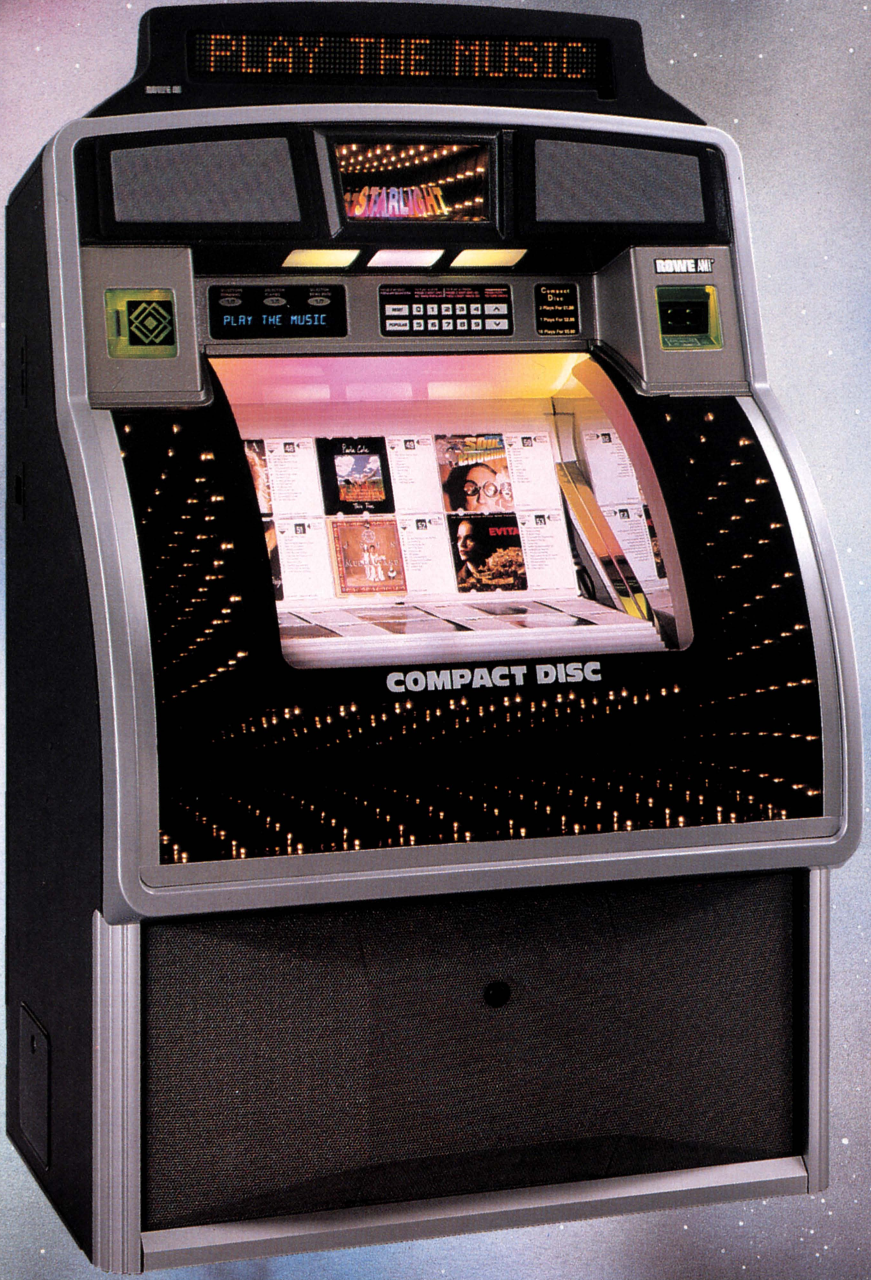

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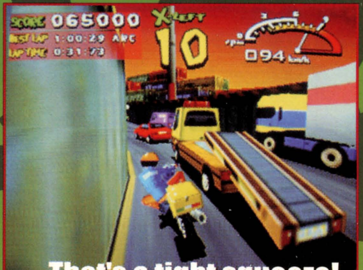
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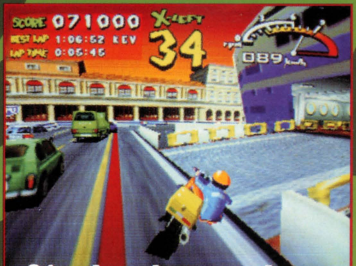
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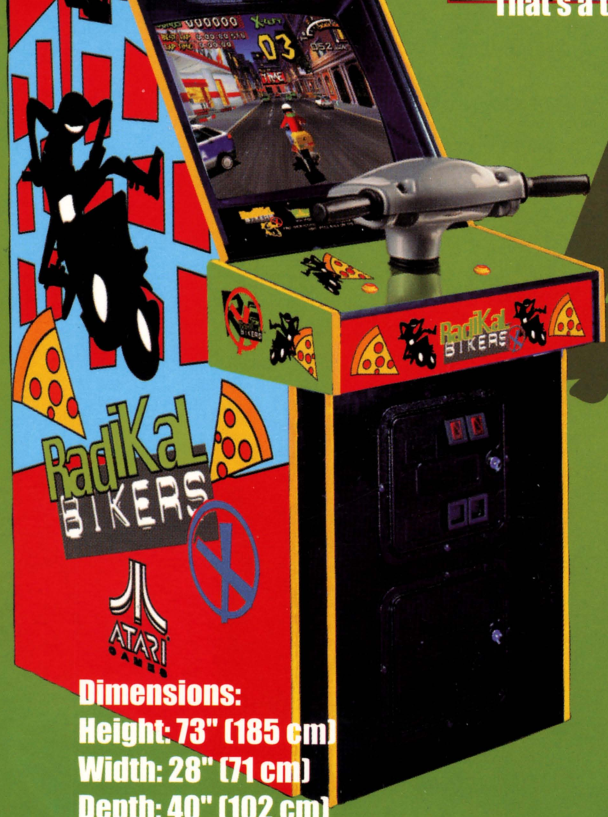
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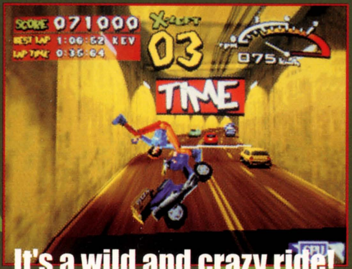
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